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The Lord's Arrows

A VOLUME OF

SUNDAY MORNING SERMONS

By

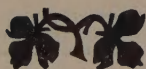
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TO MY SISTER
MAUD EVELINE BANKS,
THIS VOLUME
IS LOVINGLY DEDICATED
BY THE AUTHOR

Author's Preface

This is a volume of Sunday morning Sermons, preached during the past year in the regular course of my ministry in the First Methodist Episcopal Church, Cleveland, Ohio. They were, for the most part, preached to Christian people, and their purpose was to inspire to noble living, to give good cheer to weary hearts, and to arouse Christians to active service. The volumes of Sermons which have preceded this have received so wide and kindly a reading that I send another forth prayerfully, hoping that it may carry "The Lord's Arrows" wherever it goes, and in illustrative material help to feather the shaft of many a Christian worker into whose hands it may come.

LOUIS ALBERT BANKS

Cleveland, March 7, 1899

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THE LORD'S ARROWS

I

The King's Arrows

The arrow of the Lord's deliverance.—*2 Kings xiii, 17.*

It is at once a solemn and picturesque picture out of which these words spring. Elisha, now such a man as Elisha the aged, was setting his house in order for his departure. For many years his pure life, spiritual insight, and faithful intercession with God had been the supreme hope of his people. His life was a singularly noble one. Elijah, his great predecessor, had at least one time of cowardice; but from the day when Elisha was startled out of his day-dreams by having Elijah's cloak thrown over his shoulders as he walked behind the plow on his father's farm until the day Joash came for his final message, he lived a life of supreme devotion and fidelity to his great mission. But the end was at hand, and Joash, the young king of Israel, came to visit him. When he saw the weakness of the prophet, and the conviction was forced home upon him that the death of the great spiritual leader of the nation could not longer be deferred, he burst into tears and wept as though his heart would

break. He felt that in the loss of Elisha the nation was losing its greatest safeguard, and there can be no doubt of his sincerity as he sobbed through his tears: "O my father, my father, the chariot of Israel, and the horsemen thereof!"

Elisha was evidently determined to measure the strength of the young king, and also to impress upon him some important lessons. He said to him: "Take bow and arrows. And he took unto him bow and arrows. And he said to the king of Israel, Put thine hand upon the bow. And he put his hand upon it; and Elisha put his hands upon the king's hands. And he said, Open the window eastward. And he opened it. Then Elisha said, Shoot. And he shot. And he said, The arrow of the Lord's deliverance, and the arrow of deliverance from Syria." Perhaps the old prophet was saying to him in this way that though he himself was going to his grave, the God whose prophet he was would not lose his interest in his people, and that if the king of Israel should bend the bow against the enemies of God, the Divine hand should nerve his fingers and direct his arrows. Then the old prophet falls back on his couch, saying to the young king: "Take the arrows. And he took them. And he said unto the king of Israel, Smite upon the ground. And he smote thrice, and stayed. And the man of God was wroth with him, and said, Thou shouldest have smitten five or six times; then hadst thou smitten Syria till thou hadst consumed it: whereas now thou shalt smite Syria but thrice."

The message taught by this striking picture is of the greatest importance. The prophet teaches that

even the plans of God were modified by the character of the king of Israel. If he had been a more determined, more thoroughly-consecrated man, the victories wrought for his people would have been doubled. This, then, is our theme. We are all archers for the great King. Every Christian, man or woman, has enlisted in his service. If we enter upon our work with reverence and devotion, we may be assured that the Divine hand will be upon ours, to renew our strength and guide our arrows. We are further assured that we limit the work of God in our community by the measure of our devotion. If for any reason we are easily disheartened, or let the arrows drop from our nerveless grasp, those who wait for deliverance remain in bondage, and we fail of the joy and gladness of victory.

Let us study this old picture, and find some of the causes which led to the young king's defeat, so that, if possible, we may avoid them. It is possible that the young king Joash was discouraged and disheartened at the death of the prophet, and thought within himself that all efforts of his own, when once it was known abroad that Elisha was dead, would be of no avail. If so, he had lost the great message of Elisha's life, which ought to have taught him of the presence of God in the world, and of his willingness to interfere in behalf of those who trust in him. Many people yield to discouragement because they look only at the loss, and do not take stock of the things that remain. A man who was an officer in the Confederate army during the Civil War, found himself, at the end of it, bankrupt in property, and with the years of service in

the army thrown away. When he thought of his great losses he was in despair, and about made up his mind to commit suicide; but something led him to take a pencil and paper and set down the things that still remained that were worth living for. He had been at this writing but a few minutes when he was overwhelmed with a revulsion of feeling, and thankfully took up the burden of life again, and has carved out for himself an honorable and noble career. Perhaps some may get help from that message. Things have gone wrong with you, and you have lost something of the glow and fervor and joy of Christian life, and you are ready to give up in despair. Count up the things that remain. Your Elisha may be dead, but God still lives, and all the great sources of Divine comfort and strength are yet within your reach.

Possibly Joash had had his head turned with the flattery of the court, and was so engrossed with earthly, material things that, now that Elisha was fading away from him, there seemed to be no God and no supernatural power left to give him help. That is a temptation to which we are constantly subjected in our own day. The temptation to materialism, to fill one's mind and heart with money-getting and money-spending, was perhaps never greater than now in our own land. It is possible for us so to gorge ourselves on the things that appeal to the senses that the spiritual and supernatural—prayer, and God, and heaven, and the immortal life—seem vague and unreal.

A Tennessean tells the story of a colored freight hand on a Southern railway. He had been placed in charge of a mule whose destination was marked on

a tag attached by a string to the mule's leg. Before the animal had been persuaded to enter the car he managed to reach the tag, and, before Ben could interpose, had it well chewed up. The old man looked up at the local freight agent, and asked, in perturbation: "W'at I goin' do wid dat mewl? He done et up de place w'ere he's goin'." Alas! I fear that there are many people who are so giving themselves up to worldliness that they are eating the title and pledge of the higher life out of their souls.

Again, it may have been that Joash was held in bondage by the consciousness of his own limitations. His every-day deeds were so commonplace and ignoble that they chained his imagination and made it impossible for him to believe that any noble victories could be wrought through him. I was reading, the other day, of an old Indian scout who started out to kill a buffalo from a herd that was near by. There was a heavy sleet on the ground, and he found it difficult to get in good range on account of the noise of his feet on the crackling ice; but after following the game for several miles, he at last killed a large buffalo. By the time he had the animal skinned night had come, and he decided to remain with his meat instead of seeking camp in the darkness. So, wrapping the huge hide around him, flesh side out, he lay down and slept very comfortably until morning. On waking, he found himself tightly imprisoned in the hide, which had frozen hard, and now resisted all his efforts to escape. He struggled for many hours before the hot sun of the afternoon thawed the hide sufficiently to set him free. Is there not many a man that is thus held in

the grip of his own deeds? The things we do day by day become either helps or hindrances to our progress.

Perhaps some past failure disheartened Joash and robbed him of faith now. Nothing can be more foolish than to allow ourselves to take the pattern for the future from our failures in the past. A man was drowned in the Detroit River by some violent, murderous hand that had fastened heavy weights to his feet, so that only the top of his head showed above the water. It was seen from many boats, but the corpse was taken by them for a buoy, and so the truth was not discovered for days. One of the saddest features of daily life is beheld in the people who are taking the failures of the dead past as buoys for the channel of the living present. Suppose you have failed; that is no reason why you should fail to-day or to-morrow, if you now put yourself in the way of success by supreme consecration to God.

It may be that Joash's trouble was that he was content with low achievement. Possibly he had no great ambition to be a noble king whose reign should be famous for building up the nation and putting down its enemies. If he could only just live along and get through with his career without losing his throne, or losing his head defending it, he would be satisfied with that. Great deeds are never wrought out in that spirit. The real heroes are full of the spirit of advance and progress at any cost—men like Dewey, who, when in the darkness of the night, Gridley, of the flag-ship *Olympia*, signaled to his chief, "We are approaching the entrance to Manila Bay," signaled back, "Steam ahead!" and when a little later the boom of the

guns rang out from the frowning heights, and Captain Gridley signaled, "The batteries of Cavité have opened fire," still said, "Steam ahead!" And steam ahead they did, over sunken mines, under belching batteries, into the mouth of unknown dangers, steaming ahead to victory and immortal glory.

It was the same spirit which awed the enemy at Santiago. One of the Spanish prisoners, when questioned about the charge of Roosevelt's "Rough Riders," naively replied: "They did not fight as other soldiers. When we fired a volley, they advanced instead of going back. The more we fired, the nearer they came to us. We are not used to fighting with men who act so." Nothing can stand against men who, the more hotly they are attacked, the more fiercely they advance upon the foe. It is that spirit we want in our conquest of the city for Christ. Does evil raise its vengeful and wicked head at us, defying the rebukes of God and trampling on its plundered victims, then it is not for us to retreat, or silence our guns, but rather the more determinedly to throw ourselves against the foes of God and humanity.

Whatever may have been the cause, there was evidently about Joash a lack of enthusiastic devotion. There was a lack of that hot indignation against Syria that would have caused him to have smitten again and again and again with a passion that would have given the dying prophet smiles of appreciation rather than a feeling of indignant protest. It seems to me that that is also our greatest lack. We lack the supreme passion of love for Christ and devotion to humanity. Nothing great can be accomplished without souls who aban-

don themselves with passionate consecration to the service of Christ. Our service is too irregular; it is not thorough enough.

The Marquis of Lorne, when governor-general of Canada, was present at some sports held on the ice which covered the St. Lawrence River. Though wrapped in furs, he felt the cold acutely, and was astonished to see an ancient Indian walking around on the ice barefooted, enveloped only in a blanket. He asked the Indian how he managed to bear such a temperature with so little clothing. "Why you no cover face?" inquired the Indian. The marquis replied that he was accustomed from birth to having his face naked. "Good," rejoined the child of the forest; "me all face," and walked away. What we need is to be all Christian. Not only in the Sunday-school and the prayer-meeting, not only in our home and among our friends, but in the office, in business, in politics, in days of emergency and trial, let us be all Christian, and then the cold frowns of the world and the bitter storms of life will not be able to beat us down or destroy us.

This lack of devotion and fidelity on the part of King Joash was not a matter that interested him only. Multitudes of his people would suffer through the lack of courage on the part of their king. And so it is with us. We are the King's archers, and many whom our consecration and courage might deliver from sin will suffer unless we rouse ourselves to do our whole duty. Many will perish unless we stand between them and the devil that would destroy them. The relation of every true man and woman to their fellows was

never more clearly summed up than in these words which Mrs. Mary A. Livermore used to a tempted young man who wrote her, "I am going to the devil at a two-forty rate, and nobody can stop me." That fiery-souled woman wrote back to him, "You can not go to the devil; for I stand between you and the devil, and I do not propose to be walked over by any devil." And, true to her purpose, she roused other noble souls to her assistance, and they led him out of his despair, and saved him for a brave and useful life. Like deeds wait to be done on every Cleveland street.

In the museum of the little town of Berne, in Switzerland, is the stuffed skin of a great dog who was the most famous of all those brave animals that have struggled to save human life for scores of years past at the convent of St. Bernard, in the Alps. His name was Barry. This faithful creature served the hospice for the period of twelve years, and during that time he saved the lives of no less than forty persons. His zeal was unconquerable. It was his custom, after a heavy fall of snow, to set out by himself in search of lost travelers. He would run along, barking at the top of his lungs, until he was entirely out of breath, when he would often fall over in the snow from sheer exhaustion. No place was too perilous for him to venture into, and when he found, as he sometimes did, that his own strength was insufficient to draw from the snow a traveler benumbed by the cold, he would immediately hurry off to the hospice to fetch the monks. One day, Barry found a child, frozen apparently, between the bridge of Dronaz and the ice-

house of Balsoria. He began at once to lick him, and, having succeeded by this means in restoring animation and bringing the boy back again to consciousness, he induced the child to tie himself to the dog's body, and in that way carried him to the safe refuge.

And shall a dog have more compassion than we? Shall we, who have received such infinite love at the hands of our Savior, need to be ceaselessly prodded by our consciences, and whipped by the hard lash of adversity, into giving back some return in the salvation of those who are perishing in our midst? A greater than Elisha is watching us as we strike for God and our fellow-men. May the thought that the measure of our heroism, of our courage, of our consecration, limits the deliverance which God can bring to lost souls rouse us to win sublime and noble victories!

II

The Music of Self-Sacrifice

And when the burnt offering began, the song of the Lord began also with the trumpets, and with the instruments ordained by David king of Israel. And all the congregation worshiped, and the singers sang, and the trumpeters sounded: and all this continued until the burnt offering was finished.—
2 Chron. xxix, 27, 28.

THE cause of all these joyous songs and this glad sounding of the trumpets was a great thank-offering of sacrifice, which the people brought before the Lord. The burnt offerings alone were seventy bullocks, a hundred rams, and two hundred lambs; and the consecrated things which they gave were six hundred oxen and three thousand sheep. But so filled were their hearts with thanksgiving to God, and so thoroughly was it a heart-offering to the Lord, that they sang songs and blew trumpets for gladness in their sacrifice.

It is this contrast between the worldly and the Christian ideas of happiness of which I wish to speak. The world says you must get your music out of selfishness; that it is getting which will make you happy; that circumstances which surround you with the ministrations of wealth and power and culture will make music in your heart and life. Christ comes to set up a new standard in the world. Controverting all these theories of men, he boldly declares that it is not by

getting that the music of life is sounded, but by giving. He challenges the world with the declaration that "it is more blessed to give than to receive;" that the way to real joy, the way to fill the life with peace and the heart with sweet harmonies, to sound the noblest trumpets of the soul, is to bend the shoulders to carry burdens, teach the hands to minister to the weak, and engage thought and affection in ministrations of love and mercy.

It is not strange that men and women who have always lived selfishly should stand back in astonishment, at first glance, before such a startling proposition. But I am ready to maintain that history and observation prove that Christ is right, and the really harmonious characters in history have been those who have sacrificed themselves, and through sacrifice have evoked the sweetest music of life. It is a common thing for the infidel to sneer at a religion of self-sacrifice, to call in question Christ's demand that we shall deny ourselves, and take up our cross and follow him in order that we may be his disciples; but it is a very cheap sneer, and a very ignorant one. The law of self-sacrifice is inherent in human life, and nothing fills its mission in this world that does not serve. God is ever serving his creatures; the life of Jesus was one of constant ministry; and we fill up the full measure of our manhood and womanhood only as we minister to others. We grow in our horizon, we develop in strength, we become large and splendid in personality in proportion as we learn the art of making useful to our fellow-men every talent of love and grace which God has bestowed upon us.

But it is not this foundation fact of human life—that service is the proper sphere of our lives—to which I wish to call attention so much as to the fact that in this service is the real joy and music of life. I wish to emphasize the fact that the happy people are not the people who are taking care of themselves only, and looking out for number one, but the self-forgetful ones, whose hearts enlarge to care for others. It is easy for the pessimist to sneer, “If you do n’t look out for yourself, nobody else will.” The whole story of human life backs up the statement that the pessimists are wrong here, as they are everywhere, and that the cynical, self-centered people, who never think of anybody but themselves, are the most peevish, fretful, unhappy, unharmonious souls in any circle or community. The choirs ring out, and the trumpets sound from human hearts and homes that are always sending out embassies of mercy and helpfulness into other lives, whither their love and compassion have gone.

I have great desire to impress this truth with all possible earnestness on the hearts of many who are but beginning the Christian life. To be a joyous and happy Christian, you must learn to breathe the Christian atmosphere, and put yourself in perfect harmony with it. Some people seem to think that a Christian man is like a seal, that lives most of the time under water, but must come up once in awhile to breathe at the top. They think, seemingly, that for the most part we are to dive underneath, and live in the atmosphere of the world’s selfishness, and seek and devour with the same sort of greed as worldlings who have no God before their eyes, and that only once in

awhile—on Sunday, or Easter, or Christmas, or on special ceremonial occasions—is it necessary to emerge and catch a breath again of that nobler life through which the Sun of righteousness shines, and over which the blue sky of heaven bends. Of course, such an idea of our religion is a mere cartoon—a libel on real Christianity. The genuine Christian lives every day in the same spirit. He buys and sells; he lays his plans, and executes them; he deals with his employee, or labors for his employer, in the same spirit with which he prays to his God at his family altar or reads the responsive psalm on Sunday morning. His religion is not a rare upper world into which he occasionally thrusts his head to catch his breath, that he may not utterly drown, but it is a heavenly atmosphere in which he lives all the while. This giving of a man's self is to be a daily and hourly thing. Self-sacrifice, if it is real, is always that. If two people love each other with honorable and noble love, they are always, consciously or unconsciously, asleep or awake, present or absent, giving themselves to one another's love and service. Religion is like that. We love Christ because he first loved us. We give ourselves up to him with the abandonment of love. We see in the frailest and weakest and, humanly seeing, the most unlovable of our fellow-beings the brother of Jesus Christ, whom we love with all our hearts. This brother of Christ is scarred by sin, and has been trodden upon and despoiled of much that makes mankind beautiful and good. There is nothing about him yet that we can love for himself; but if we love him for his Brother's sake, and minister to the spark of manhood left

within, we shall get joy from our service because of the happiness we are giving our Christ in serving this his relative, for whom he has wept and died; and after awhile we shall come to love the man for his own sake, because through our ministry he has become lovable.

I want to urge upon every young Christian that the only really musical and joyous life is the helpful life. The only thing that can make a man really glad—glad in the depths of his nature, from which the trumpets of true joy sound—is to know that he has imparted his very self, the very heat and life and vitality of his own nature, to some weaker, feebler brother, and that he lives again in another, whom he has refreshed and restored.

Tolstoi, in his story of "Master and Man," tells of a rich, hard old Russian trader, who has worked early and late until, out of the poverty of his ancestry, he has come to be the big man in his community. He has two mills; and he has farms and flocks and herds, and money laid by. Still he goes on working, because he has determined that he will be as a millionaire whom he has come to know, and whose position is the envious center of his greedy dreams. He starts out on a trip to the market town, with one serving man with him. There comes up a terrible storm, and they become bewildered in the snow, and can go no further. They camp for the night. They drink their tea, and try to endure until the morning. The poor serving man is thinly clad, and sits in a heap, with his back against the sledge. The big master is clothed in furs, and he makes himself as comfortable

as he can inside the sledge. But the cold increases, and, after awhile, he becomes uneasy. About midnight he hears the howl of a wolf not far away. He starts up in the sledge; the horse, tied to the side of the sledge, is also frightened. The man gets out, tramps about for a few moments in dismay, and then, muttering to himself that he will not die there to be devoured by wolves, mounts the horse, and rides away. He thinks of the poor serving man whom he is leaving to freeze to death alone; but with selfish contempt he says, "His lot is a hard one, anyhow; he has nothing to leave; but with me it is very different;" and he rides forward. The horse blunders on through the snow as best he can. Every now and then he flounders in the drifts. After a little, to the astonishment of the master, he comes on the track of another horse, and he follows it, expecting it soon will lead him to a house; but they go on and on and get nowhere. Finally the horse flounders deeply and throws the rider off his back, and plunges away from him. The man gets up and trudges along after the horse, and soon comes back again to the camp. They had been going round and round all the time.

He comes up to the side of the sledge, and he knows by the heap of snow in it that the poor serving man has crawled into the sledge in his absence. The poor fellow lifts his head with an effort, and waves his hand in front of his face with a strange gesture, as if chasing flies, and cries out faintly in answer to the master's question as to what is the matter, "I am dying; that is what is the matter," in a broken voice. "Look after my son and my wife."

"What is the matter? Are you frozen?"

"I feel my death! Pardon! The love of Christ!" murmured the poor man in a tearful voice.

The great, hard-hearted, greedy master stood for a moment, without speaking or moving. A new feeling of compassion that was strange to him was stirring in his heart. Suddenly, with the same rapid decision with which he was accustomed to strike hands over a good bargain, he stepped back a pace, turned up his cuffs, and with both hands began to dig the snow off his servant and out of the sledge. When this was done, he hurriedly undid his girdle, threw open his fur coat, and flung himself upon the freezing man, covering him not only with his coat, but with his whole glowing warm body. Arranging the skirt of his coat between his servant and the back of the sledge, and grasping him between his own knees, he lay flat, hearing no longer the whistling of the wind, but only the servant's breathing. The poor fellow lay motionless at first, then sighed deeply and moved, evidently feeling warmer.

"There, now! And you talking of dying! Lie still and get warm! That's how we—"

But to his great astonishment, the master could get no further in his speech, for the tears crowded into his eyes, and his lower jaw trembled. He left off talking, and only gulped down something rising in his throat.

"I have got a regular fright, and am as weak as a baby," thought he to himself; but that weakness, far from being disagreeable, gave him a peculiar pleasure, the like of which he had never felt before. After a

little while he wanted terribly to tell somebody how happy he was.

"Nikita!" said he, speaking the man's name.

"Nice! Warm!" came the answer from below.

"So, so brother! I would have been lost, and you would have been frozen! I—"

But here again his jaw trembled, his eyes filled with tears, and he could not go on.

"Well, never mind," he thought; "I know very well myself what I know," and he kept silent. But his heart sang with joy, and he never had been so proud of buying and selling as he was in bringing warmth and life to that poor serving man whom but a little while ago he had been willing to leave to freeze to death alone. The new joy was the sweetest he had ever known.

The great novelist is true to life in that picture, and is only repeating in the story the message which I am trying to give you from God's Word, that the richest music of life can only come from the conscious giving of self in blessing to our fellow-men.

The better I come to know human nature, and the more I observe human life, the surer am I that the root sin of the world is selfishness, and that those who have tried to give themselves to the Christian life, and have afterwards lost the joy of their early experience, and have found the fruit of Christianity not developing and ripening as it ought, but rather falling, worm-eaten, beneath the tree, have failed through selfishness. Selfishness has been the worm that has eaten into their Christian life at its root, and checked that divine vitality which ought to have been theirs in abundance.

The water-supply was once stopped in an English college. At first they could find no reason for it. They searched the cisterns, and inspected the taps and the whole machinery, and found no cause. At last they went to the junction between the main reservoir-pipe and their house-pipe, and there, in the orifice in the joint between the two, squatted a huge toad, which had probably come in as a tadpole, had fed upon the impurities in the water, and had grown to such size that the whole water was stopped, because it choked the pipe. A little selfishness, allowed to have its way in the heart of a Christian, will grow and develop like that toad, until it will choke up the channel of communication between the soul and God. Get rid of your selfishness, open your heart in unselfish and loving service for Christ and for his brethren, and the water of life will again nourish your soul, the trumpets of joy will sound, and the singers rejoice.

Let us give God all our heart and every power we have. How rarely it is that we see a man or woman who is awakening all the music that is in the soul! It is too common for us to give God only a part of the capacity which we have.

It is said that once Paganini, standing before a great audience, broke string after string in his violin, until only one was left. He held up his violin, and said, "One string and Paganini."

The great artist could evoke beautiful music from even one string, but it was as nothing compared to what he could do with a whole violin complete with all its strings. Most of the living we see, even among good men and women, is heaven's art playing on one string

in the heart. The others have been marred and broken. It is only rarely that we see what the Lord can do with a whole violin, a whole heart, a whole life, with all its musical strings surrendered to the touch of the Divine hand. Brother, sister, give him thine, that he may wake the sweetest music to which men or angels have ever listened!

III

The Underground of Life

The deep that coucheth beneath.—*Deut. xxxiii, 13.*

FULL of years and full of honors, Moses, the leader and the lawgiver of his people, was uttering his farewell words before being led away to the mountain-top for his final departure from the world. In his last words of benediction upon the people, he recalls the inheritance of each tribe as set forth in Jacob's outline of the past and future of his sons.

The text which I have read is a part of the words of blessing and prophecy uttered concerning the descendants of Joseph. It opens, "And of Joseph he said, Blessed of the Lord be his land for the precious things of heaven, for the dew, and for the deep that coucheth beneath." The deep that coucheth beneath suggests that great reservoir of water which flows underneath the soil in a fertile land, and makes possible rich growths in forest and in field. The blessings of the sunshine can be of no value unless there be a deep reservoir of nourishment beneath the soil. Sunshine, warmth, on a desert of sand means that the desert shall become more unbearable; but the warmth of the sun falling on the well-watered earth brings forth the most precious fruits, and adorns all the land with beauty.

Now, it is my purpose to use this beautiful figure

to suggest the spiritual truth, that the fruitfulness of life depends most of all upon the reservoirs of nourishment that are underground and out of sight. All outward life depends upon that reservoir underneath for its nourishment and support. To have great success—that is, great harvests in intellectual and spiritual life—there must be a “deep” of nourishment beneath the soil of every-day experience that comes from streams pouring from the lofty mountain-ranges of God’s own heart.

There are many people who live only on the surface. In the Parable of the Sower, Christ speaks of them as those who received the seed on stony ground, and when the hot sun beat on the shallow soil, the grain sprang up very quickly, but because it had no depth of earth it soon withered away. It perished for lack of “the deep that coucheth beneath.” There seem to be many people who live in their sensations. They like to hear oratory, or read books that rouse their emotions of pity and sympathy with suffering humanity; but there is no deep of real brotherhood couching beneath, and no great deeds of self-sacrifice ever spring from those easily-started tears.

Such people remind one of the patriotic woman who wept over the ice-house at Mount Vernon, supposing it to be the tomb of the father of his country. A parallel case just comes to us from Boston. A woman from the West, visiting Boston for the first time, was describing to a friend on her return her experiences. “I had my greatest thrill,” she said, “down at Copps’ Hill burying-ground.”

"Yes, that's just the place for historic emotions," commented her companion.

"As soon as my sister-in-law and I got into the place," said the recent traveler, "I found myself almost stepping upon a grave with an inscription on a queer little iron-cover sort of tomb. I jumped back, feeling the way you do when you step on a grave, and the inscription—just three initials, no name or date. 'Is n't it pathetic?' I said to my sister-in-law. 'O, I do n't know,' she answered; 'B. W. W. means Boston Water Works.'"

The thrills of a great many people run no deeper than that. They live on the surface. They eat and drink and are merry, or have a bad time. Their happiness is as shallow as their sorrow, and their sorrow no deeper than their joy. It is infinitely sad, because the great deeps of human life never seem to be broken up in them.

All the great displays of life mean nothing unless the inner reality for which they stand is taken into account. One of the special favors granted to Emperor William of Germany on his recent visit to Jerusalem was the permission from the Sultan of Turkey to visit the so-called tomb of David. For nearly four centuries this shrine has been under the watch and ward of the Moslems. No Christian during all that time has been allowed to approach it. This fact was brought to the attention of the Emperor by the man who guards the spot. Hence the privilege granted to his Imperial Majesty of Germany was a notable one.

The tomb of David, however, is of little impor-

tance compared to the spirit of David, which still sings in his psalms the wide world round. Who would trade the twenty-third Psalm, with its great reservoir of spiritual comfort and heavenly refreshment, for all the tombs of all the great men that ever lived? The outer shell of life is of little account; it is the underground of life, the spirit in which we live, that is important. The soul that thinks lofty thoughts, and dwells in noble spiritual fellowships, and gives expression to high purpose, does not die with the body, but breathes a gracious influence over the race that will heal and bless through all time to come.

It is only by enlarging this underground reservoir of the soul that we can free ourselves from the slavery of local and temporary surroundings. If there be a long season of dry weather, the soil must draw for its fertility upon the "deep that coucheth beneath;" if there be no deep there, then there is a famine. So there are a great many people who are entirely dependent for their happiness on their immediate surroundings. They are happy or unhappy, they are interested or bored, simply as they are pleased or not with the people among whom they find themselves. But it is the noble possibility of the human mind and heart to be filling a great reservoir beneath the surface of every-day experience in the underground vaults of the soul, so that, in times of drought of worldly happiness, one may draw on the "deep that coucheth beneath." God has never made any soul so poor in possibilities that there may not be this hidden reservoir of nourishment.

Not long ago, Helen Keller, the beautiful deaf and

blind girl, who is getting her education at Radcliffe College, the woman's wing of Harvard University, was invited to visit the Boston Art Museum. You must remember that her eyes are as sightless as though they were stone, that she can not hear a sound, has never heard her own voice, and was dumb until taught the art of speech through the sense of touch. For some time Helen has been carefully trained in Greek, and her great proficiency showed during her visit to the Museum. She appeared thoroughly familiar with all the old Greek mythologies, and it seems that she has just been reading the Iliad. When she was informed of her invitation, she was delighted, and said she had always wanted to see the "silver-bowed god and the white-armed goddesses." At the Museum, the first statue shown her was that of Apollo. A stepladder was brought, and she mounted until she could reach the face. She put both hands on the forehead, touching it lightly with the tips of her fingers. From the center of the forehead she deftly followed the curves outward, then down the cheeks until her hands met at the chin; then both eyes were touched; then the nose, and, lastly, the mouth, her hands moving in unison. Next the arms and other parts of the statue were examined. This was the order pursued each time. Every new curve was a surprise and pleasure to her. She was as eager as a child at each fresh discovery, and when anything pleased her especially, would give a quick gasp of pleasure and clasp her hands, bending forward her whole figure. Her comment on Apollo was, "It is grand beyond description." Of another god she said, "He has an exalted

look;" and of Medusa, "Her expression is painful." She was shown the bas-relief of a mother bidding farewell to her child. In this the arms of the mother were missing. Her first question was: "Where are the mother's arms? She should embrace her child." Of the mother, she remarked, "She has sorrowful eyes, wide open; her lips seem to quiver; she lifts up her forehead a little." Upon being shown a bas-relief representing several singers, she passed her fingers over the lips of each until she came to one whose lips were closed. As soon as her sensitive fingers touched this one, she announced, "One is silent." She was especially pleased with Michael Angelo's group of Mother and Child; and, having examined each of its figures separately, she placed one hand on the mother's face and the other on that of the child, and remained in that position for a brief minute, as if touched with the gentle picture of motherhood. Then she said, softly, "It is very sweet and lovely."

If one denied the great avenues of knowledge (such as sight and hearing), having only the one tunnel along the nerve of sensation, can by industry and enthusiastic devotion to high purpose store up so great a reservoir of nourishment to draw upon in the twenty-four dark hours of every day, with what rapture and ecstasy ought we, who have all the windows open, seek to enrich and make strong and fertile the life God has committed to us!

Every victory over sin, every resistance of temptation, every triumph over selfishness, is a trickling rill that swells the reservoir of spiritual blessing. Every sentence of Divine promise from God's Word

timidity of love, some sense of holy reverence, held him back, and he stooped down and looked in, and saw the linen clothes lying, but did not enter.

But when Simon Peter came to the sepulcher, he did not hesitate. That bold, impetuous man was never troubled much by over-sensitiveness in investigating mysteries. And so, true to his make-up, he went directly into the tomb, and noticed that the napkin that was about the head of Jesus was not lying with the linen clothes, but lay wrapped together in a place by itself.

Now, after Peter had gone in and made these discoveries, John also entered, and he dates his belief in the resurrection of Christ from that moment; for he writes that then and there he "saw and believed."

Now, it would seem rather a fragile reed on which to build a sermon upon the great theme of love's swiftmess in getting at the heart of things, if this were the only illustration of John's superiority over Peter and the other disciples in quickness of perception wherever Jesus was the person in question. But there are other cases. You remember the incident after the night they had spent fishing on the lake, and were coming in empty-handed in the morning, when Jesus stood on the shore, and none of them knew at first that it was the Lord. Then the Savior cried aloud to them, and asked what luck they had had in the fishing; and when they gave him a discouraged answer, he shouted back to them directions as to where they should cast their net, and immediately they made a great haul. But no sooner did their luck turn, than John's love quickened his perceptions to understand

that it was their Lord who was standing by the shore of the lake, and he turned to Peter, and said, softly, "It is the Lord."

The other disciples seemed to have admired and adored Christ as much as John, but there are many things to show us that John's love took the near cut into the inner life of Jesus, and he alone discovered the many-sided life of the Savior. He not only adored and worshiped him as his great leader, but he loved him as a man. How this comes out at the last supper, where he is lying with his head on the bosom of Christ; and how it shows again at the crucifixion, when Jesus asks John to take care of his mother, and John accepts that sacred trust! I would we might have the same love for Jesus that would bring him closer to us than any mystical adoration possibly can.

Tissot, the great French artist, who is just now reaping his splendid reward for a lifetime of reverent, earnest work in seeking to portray in truthful representation the real human life of Jesus, brings Christ infinitely nearer to us, to my mind, than the greatest works of the old masters. Dr. Carwardine sings of this new conception of Jesus in art:

"Is this my Christ?

Surely I had not learned him thus,
Nor dreamed that he were so like us!
That he so much a man doth seem,
Who came from heaven to me redeem.

Is this my Christ?

He who walked by Galilee,
And set the weary captives free,
Who hungered in the wilderness
And wept and pitied human stress?

Is this my Christ?
No aureole about his head,
From whence all earthliness hath fled;
So much like human hearts,
That groan to-day from bitter darts.

Is this my Christ?
The same whom Raphael's art has deified;
Da Vinci, Guido, and Tintoretto sanctified?
The same whom ancient master's brush
Hath taught was not of common dust?

This is my Christ!
O thou painter of God's Son,
Well, indeed, your work is done!
I love thy art so wondrous free,
That brings my Christ so near to me."

It is said that Mr. Kipling writes all his verses while humming tunes. He takes up a tune, and hums it over and over until the spirit moves him to write words to fit it. However this may be, it must certainly be true that what has given him his greatest power, both as a poet and a writer of fiction, is the fact that his own mind and heart are attuned to love and sympathy with human nature itself. This gives him his power to be the greatest interpreter of the spirit of our own time. A writer in a London journal declares that the sympathy of the civilized world in Mr. Kipling's recent illness has not been based merely on the sense of sorrow for a man of genius struck down in the flower of his youth; that, while the eternal pitifulness of sickness and death overshadowing so splendid and so youthful a career has doubtless counted for a great deal, yet it could not alone have produced the universal sense of anxiety. Un-

consciously, but none the less strongly, intelligent people everywhere have felt that the death of this man would leave us all poorer in respect of what a people always needs most—an influence which, while bright, living, concentrated, attractive, is also an influence that makes for public righteousness, which helps to build up character, and makes us think less of the material and petty things of life and more of the great and lasting issues. This has made Mr. Kipling the chief interpreter of the best thought and feeling of humanity in our day.

And so, as Kipling is able to be the interpreter of human life to-day because he sympathizes with it, loves it, hopes for it, John is the supreme interpreter in the Bible of the heart and life of Jesus Christ to us. His love gave him that power; and only love can give us the power rightly to interpret the life and character of the Savior to other men and women. No man can interpret Christ to others unless he loves Christ; unless, like John, he pillows his head upon the Savior's bosom; unless, like John, he accepts the Savior's trust, and makes the work of Christ his own.

It is love alone that can give us swift insight and access to the divine possibilities that are within sinful and broken humanity. Christ tells us that the possible Christ is in every man we meet, and that it is our greatest privilege to find him and do him honor when he is hungry and sick and imprisoned. But it is only through the spirit of love that we can get the quickness of perception to see the background of pathos worth living and dying for in the soiled and frayed humanity that bids for our contempt. How

many a case of like tragedy is suggested by Maud Huey's little song:

"He was only a man with an old violin,
And he stood on the pavement and played in the sleet
With the thing gripped firm 'neath his bearded chin;
He was ugly and ragged, you understand,
With a grime-daubed shirt and a tattooed hand,—
Just a Dago man and an old violin,
Gripped 'neath a rough, black-bearded chin.

And he drew the bow with a tremulous swing
Over the strings, and his other hand
Touched the neck of the battered thing;
Stroked and lingered to gently press
Some well-worn spot with a mute caress,
Or to finger a moment the greasy string
Tied about the throat of the thing.

Just a Dago man below in the sleet,
And an old violin with a tremulous note;
And there below in the dismal street
Was a dingy crib and a babe who cried,
A puny babe and a mother beside,
Who rocked the thing with her shoeless feet.
I harked to the Dago in the street,—

And the pavement vanished, and there before,
Was a dismal room with musty walls,
And a warmless stove, and a splintered floor,
And a woman's dark and restless eyes,
Seeking the one lone window for skies,
Fancying clouds, not smoke, passed o'er
To spread grim shadows over the floor;

That the smell of the dark, filth-oozing street
Bore breath from a smiling southern sod
As she tilted the crib with shoeless feet,
And sewed as she murmured a lullaby
To hush the baby's shivering cry,—
Just a fierce, old Dago out in the sleet,
Playing his violin down on the street."

It is this power which love gives to go back behind the present man we see, and realize his sorrows and the sins that have made them; to realize his Divine parentage and the possibility of transformation into the image of God,—it is this that opens the gate to possible usefulness in serving our fellow-men. It was this love that gave speed to the Christ coming down from heaven to be born in the manger. It was this love that gave swiftness to the pinions of the angel who came to roll back the stone from the sepulcher on Easter morning. It was this love that made Paul willing to risk his life to save that dream-man from Macedonia who appealed to him in his sleep in the night. It was this love that made William Carey the missionary evangel of a hundred years ago. It was this love that lighted the path for David Livingstone through Darkest Africa. It is this supreme love which gives wings to mercy in carrying the gospel to the heathen, in building asylums for the unfortunate, in erecting hospitals for the sick, in searching out the needs of the poor, in bringing heaven down to earth's hell of sin and want.

Love only can carry us with rapid steps to peace. There is a story told of a peasant named Hans. He grumbled about everything. His room was too small, his bed was too hard, his porridge too salt. He found fault with his mother because she called him so early in the morning, and with his shoes because they were clumsy, and with his work because it was irksome. He was always unhappy.

"What do you want?" asked the spirit of the field, meeting him at his work one day.

"O, I want everything!" cried Hans, impetuously.

"If you could only find the little blue flower," said the spirit of the field, "you would have everything; for it would give you perfect peace;" and she passed on her way.

Hans left his tools in the field that day, and started out in search of this wonderful blue flower, which was to give peace to his troubled breast. He traveled over mountains and through valleys, past woods and streams; he searched through the little villages on the way, and hunted over thirsty deserts and through deep jungles and in great cities. He was often cold and tired and hungry; his heart ached with loneliness, and many a night he had no roof to shelter him but the stars, no blanket to dream under but the low-hanging clouds; and the little blue flower was nowhere to be found.

Years passed away, and Hans had finally made the circuit of the globe, and came again in sight of his own little cottage. His mother opened the door.

"Hans! my son! my dear son!" she cried, with tears of gladness in her eyes. Then Hans was in her arms.

"Where is the little blue flower?" the mother asked, when she could speak for crying. "Have you found it yet?"

"Yes, mother," answered Hans, also in tears; "I have found it in your eyes."

But our earthly love, though it be the dearest that can enrapture the soul, is subject to the cruel loss of absence and separation by the angel of death; only the love which one may see by looking steadfastly into

the eyes of Jesus Christ will give perfect peace—peace to the young, to the middle-aged, and to the old; peace amid the enthusiasm and inspiration of youth; peace through the strong days of middle life's struggle and achievement; peace in the days when the hair whitens and the hand trembles; peace for the sunrise, peace for the noontide, peace for the sunset. God give our feet the quickening impulse of that love that shall speed us toward that realm of immortal peace!

V

The Three Bearers for Every Burden

Every man shall bear his own burden.—*Gal. vi, 5.*

Bear ye one another's burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ.—*Gal. vi, 2.*

Cast thy burden upon the Lord, and he shall sustain thee.—*Psalm lv, 22.*

IN our journey through this world, we shall have much to do with burdens. All life that is of value and importance is of service somehow, and somewhere, to somebody. We are strengthened by means of burden-bearing. The arm that is not used becomes flabby in muscle and without the joyous sensations of strength. The exuberant gladness which comes from the exultation in conscious strength is never known to those who have not tested their strength under the weight of the burden. We are often tempted to think that life would be richer and sweeter without responsibilities and cares; but a life without these would be utterly insipid and tasteless, and would become so monotonous and uninteresting that we would welcome almost any change.

A mother, speaking about her children, was overheard to call them, in a caressing way, her "precious cares." We all understand what she meant. The looking after the health and the safety and the education and the moral discipline of her children caused each one of them to be a care, a burden. And yet the joy

that came to her through them was so sweet that they became precious cares—precious burdens. Rest assured that it is the path of responsibility—the path that is full of burdens—which develops our strength physically, mentally, and morally, and the one which is richest in the deeper joys of life.

We have another temptation common to man, which causes us to imagine that our own burdens are a little harder than those which others bear, and that we could exchange them, if we had a chance, to our great advantage. That is because we know the weight of the burden that presses on our own shoulders, and do not appreciate the load which our neighbor is carrying.

Some one sings of three women who bent over an infant in its cradle, each breathing a prayer for the future of the child, and each one being guided by her own experience with the burdens of life. Longing in her heart to save the child from the sorrows she had known,—

“One poured her love on many lives,
But knew love's toil and care;
Its burdens oft had been to her
A heavy weight to bear;
She stooped and murmured lovingly,
'Not hardened hands, dear child, for thee!’

One had not known the burdened hands,
But knew the empty heart;
At life's rich banquet she had sat,
An unfed guest, apart;
'O, not!' she whispered, tenderly,
'An empty heart, dear child, for thee!’

And one was old ; she had known care,
She had known loneliness ;
She knew God leads us by no path
His presence can not bless ;
She smiled and murmured trustfully,
‘God’s will, dear child, God’s will for thee!’ ”

And that last is a wise prayer, I think, for us all. The burden that God wishes us to carry is the burden that will develop in us the noblest character, and lead to the sublimest destiny.

We have suggested in these three passages that I have brought together the philosophy of the Bible on burden-bearing. There are three people interested in every burden that is to be carried.

We have, first, a thought of self-reliance. How Paul’s self-reliant nature speaks out through this first sentence, “Every man shall bear his own burden!” We have no right to expect other people to tug at our loads until we ourselves have lifted the last pound that is in us. To lose the joy of self-reliance is one of the greatest losses that can come to a human soul. Parents frequently make the great blunder of bringing up their children so shielded from a sense of responsibility and care that, when they are matured physically, they are as little fitted for the great and serious work of life as a flock of butterflies would be. To do that is to rob and beggar a child. Every one has a right to the joy that comes from an honest pull at his own load ; a right to the self-respecting gladness and pride which is the experience of every one who bares his shoulder to his burden and carries it off like a man, with eyes in the air and steady step. No man ever carries

his burden that way, no woman ever faces the burdens of her life in such a spirit, without finding unexpected compensations.

There is an old story of a king who took great delight in teaching his people good habits. One night he put a large stone in the middle of the road near his palace, and then watched to see what the people who passed that way would do.

Early in the morning a sturdy old farmer named Peter came along with his heavy ox-cart loaded with corn. "O, these lazy people!" he cried, driving his oxen to one side of the road; "here is this big stone right in the middle of the road, and nobody will take the trouble to move it." And then he went on his way, scolding about the laziness of other people, but never thinking of touching the stone himself.

Then came a young soldier, singing a merry song as he walked along. A gay feather was stuck in his hat, and a big sword hung at his side; and he was fond of telling great stories of what he had done in the war. He held his head so high that he did not see the stone, but stumbled over it, and fell flat in the dust. This put an end to his merry song; and as he rose to his feet, he began to storm at the country people. "Silly drones," he said, "to have no more sense than to leave a stone like that in the middle of the road!" Then he passed on, but did not sing any more.

An hour later there came down the road six merchants with their goods on pack-horses, going to the fair that was to be held near the village. When they reached the stone, the road was so narrow that they could hardly drive their horses between it and the

wall. "Did you ever see the like?" they said. "There is that big stone in the road, and not a man in all the country but is too lazy to move it!"

And so the stone lay for three weeks; it was in everybody's way, and yet everybody left it for somebody else to move.

Then the king gathered his people together to hear what he had to say to them, and when the great crowd had assembled, he rode up to the stone, got down from his horse, and said: "My friends, it was I who put this stone here three weeks ago. It has been seen by every one of you; and yet every one has left it just where it was, and scolded his neighbor for not moving it out of the way."

Then the king stooped down and rolled the stone over. Underneath the stone was a round hollow place, in which was a small iron box. The king held up the box so that all the people might see what was written on a piece of paper fastened to it. These were the words: "For him who lifts the stone." He opened the box, and out of it fell a beautiful gold ring and twenty bright gold coins.

Then every one wished that he had only thought of moving the stone himself instead of going around it and finding fault with his neighbor. There are many of us who lose prizes far richer than that by failing to take up our own burden in a spirit of promptness and submission to the will of God.

A teacher was explaining to her class words concerning God's angels, "ministers of his who do his pleasure," and asked, "How do the angels carry out God's will?"

Many answers followed.

One said, "They do it directly."

Another, "They do it with all their hearts."

A third, "They do it well."

And, after a pause, a quiet little girl added, "They do it without asking any questions." I think Paul must have been in that spirit about it when he began the twelfth chapter of his letter to the Romans. What a striking sentence it is, what military spirit and action there is in it: "Present your bodies, a living sacrifice, to God!"

Present!

"What would you think of a soldier," says John G. Woolley, "who, when the captain commanded, 'Present arms!' should ask, 'W-h-e-n?' "

But many people approach the burdens of life in that kind of spirit, and no wonder that they lose all the joy and enthusiasm and strength that comes from doing the will of God with promptness and fidelity.

But I am grateful that there is still another thought in God's heart about burden-bearing, and that is the thought of brotherly sympathy and fellowship. If it was Paul's strong self-reliance which sounded out clear in this other sentence, "Every man shall bear his own burden," it is surely his great, warm heart that speaks now, "Bear ye one another's burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ." Frances Willard used to like to say that Christianity means "together." It means brotherhood and fellowship. We are to share with one another, and when a man has lifted at his burden until he sees stars, and can't get on, he is not to be left to despair alone, but we are to put our strong arm be-

side his and share with him, not only in lifting the load, but by encouraging him with our presence and sympathy. It is not too much to say that this is the supreme test of Christianity. The high-water mark, the extra of Christianity above all worldliness, is where the strong, in loving sympathy, stoop to bear the burdens of the weak. To the pure worldling it seems folly; but it is that kind of divine folly, better than any earthly wisdom, which brought Jesus down from heaven to earth to save lost sinners.

When Professor Taylor, in Chicago, was establishing the college settlement known as "The Chicago Commons," he went to call on two brothers, business men, who had charge of a house which he wanted to rent for the use of the settlement. One of them said to him: "Now, Professor, before we can lease this property to you, a few matters must be understood. There are some purposes for which this property can not be used."

"Indeed?" responded the professor. "And what are the purposes tabooed?"

"Well, you must not open a saloon there."

"No, I do n't want it for a saloon."

"Nor a dance-hall?"

"No, I shall not open a dance-hall."

"Nor a gambling-house?"

"I have no intention of opening a gambling-house."

"A hospital, perhaps?"

"No, I do n't want to open a hospital."

"Well, what are you going to use it for?"

"To live in."

"Yes; but how are you going to make your money out of it?"

"Do n't expect to make money out of it."

"I mean how are you going to get your expense back?"

"Do n't expect to get it back."

"What is there in it for you, then?"

"Nothing—except a home."

"Do you mean that you are going to live there?"

"Exactly."

"Do you mean to say that you people, who could live on Ashland Boulevard, are going to make your home deliberately among Italians and Polacks, in this dirt and smoke?"

"That is precisely what I mean."

"And not have any home but this?"

"That exactly."

The business man looked at the professor for a long time, and then, turning to his brother, exclaimed, "Well, brother, there are such people in the world, I suppose, but this is the first one I ever saw!"

And yet I imagine that it is often a sublimer testimony to the Divine power and presence of Jesus Christ for the strong and successful to bear the burdens of the weaker brother or sister in the ordinary quiet walks of life than in some heroic effort like that. In sharing our brother's burden we may be sure to come into close touch with Jesus Christ.

I have left time only to hint at the climax of all this philosophy of burden-bearing, which is set forth so beautifully in our last text: "Cast thy burden upon the Lord, and he shall sustain thee." That does not in any way interfere with our self-reliance, or with our sympathetic helping of our brother. But we are only

strengthened in both the other cases by the assurance that when we have come to the end of our own strength, and to the limit of all that brotherly sympathy and fellowship can do, there are yet beneath us the everlasting arms and the sleepless vigilance of God. Whatever foe we may meet, though he overcome us and baffle our friends, he has not the victory yet; for the enemy of our souls must measure arms with God, and there he shall be defeated. We may cast all our burden on Him, always on condition that we are doing our best, and know that only good shall be the result.

Dr. W. Clay Trumbull tells of a little boy in a trundle-bed, who never went to sleep in the dark without asking, "Papa, are you there?"

"Yes, my son."

"Will you take care of me to-night?"

"Yes, my son."

And then he would turn over and go to sleep.

"That little boy," says Dr. Trumbull, "is now an old man of sixty-seven, but he never goes to sleep without looking up into his Heavenly Father's face, and saying, 'Father, will you take care of me to-night?' And the answer comes back in every experience of darkness, 'Yes, my son,' and then the Lord 'giveth his beloved sleep.'"

VI

How to Keep from Fainting

We faint not.—*2 Cor. iv, 1.*

SINCE the day when man was driven from the Garden of Eden because of his sin, and the assurance was given him that by the sweat of his brow should he eat bread—bread won from an earth cursed with thorns and thistles—the temptation to faint has been one of the problems with which man has had to deal. I think it was Madame De Staël who said, "Life is not a hymn, but a struggle." I should change that by saying that it is both. Sometimes it is a hymn of praise, sometimes it is a dirge, sometimes a hallelujah chorus, and sometimes a sonnet of happy enthusiasm; but perhaps, after all, in the long run, she is right in saying that for every earnest soul life is a struggle, yet oftentimes the hymn helps us in the struggle.

How to sustain the enthusiasm of life and go on with our work with courage and forceful purpose, is one of the great problems of living. For simple existence is not living. Many people go on living after they have fainted. There is a woman somewhere in New York who fainted away twenty years ago, and she is still alive, though she has never come to yet. That is a very rare case in a physical way, but it is a very common occurrence in the higher and more important phases of life. Who of us does not know of people who

fainted away twenty or thirty years ago, losing out of their lives all the hopeful faith and buoyant courage that make life a continuous boon and an abiding source of thanksgiving?

There could certainly be no more profitable theme for our study than to discover, if possible, some methods by which we may build up our strength against the possibility of fainting by the way. In the affairs of the world, the daily employments and professions by which we get our bread, as well as in the higher life of the soul, the struggle to overcome sin and to live a life of high fellowships and holy purpose, the temptation to faint is frequent, and oftentimes very pressing. It is the man who perseveres unto the end that shall be saved. It is he who overcomes that shall wear the crown. The harvest is gathered by the man who does not faint either in sowing or cultivating, but waits with patience the ripening days of summer. How, then, can we keep from fainting?

In the New Testament, as well as in the Old, we find many references to fainting as one of the greatest dangers that attends the way of those who seek to live good and pure lives. By studying them we shall find our answer.

One of the refreshing draughts suggested in the Bible as a help against fainting is to keep fresh in the mind a hope and expectation of God's presence and blessing. David said: "I had fainted, unless I had believed to see the goodness of the Lord in the land of the living. Wait on the Lord: be of good courage, and he shall strengthen thy heart: wait, I say, on the Lord." We should live in an expectancy of God's

interfering in our behalf. The promise is that he will supply all our needs according to his riches in glory through Christ Jesus, and if we live in that faith we are daily refreshed against the danger of fainting. Paul seemed always to live in that spirit. Some people are always expecting something to happen, but with them it is a foreboding of some calamity or disaster. They are ever prophesying evil, and they suffer a vast amount of trouble which never happens. But Paul, like David, kept himself from fainting by living in a spirit of expectancy of the deliverance of God. When he was on the Alexandrian corn-ship in a storm, and shipwreck and death stared them in the face, everybody on the ship from the captain down, except Paul, fainted and lost heart. But Paul was kept from fainting by his expectation of the goodness of God, and as he waited on the Lord in prayer such comfort came to him that he was able to call the hopeless crew together and say to them: "I exhort you to be of good cheer: for there shall be no loss of any man's life among you. . . . For there stood by me this night the angel of God, whose I am, and whom I serve, saying, Fear not, Paul: . . . Lo, God hath given thee all them that sail with thee. Wherefore, sirs, be of good cheer: for I believe God, that it shall be even as it was told me." And Paul was so sure of it that his happy spirits were contagious, and the sailors who had been so hopeless that they could not eat began to have an appetite for their food. Such is the influence of one man whose heart remains strong in a trying situation.

Paul was in this same spirit of happy expectancy when, in company with Silas, he was thrown into the

dungeon at Philippi. It looked like a hard case, stoned and beaten as they were, their feet thrust into the stocks in the worst cell in the prison, and they left without food or attention. How some Church members would have made the air blue with their groans and their forebodings of a miserable death in that horrid prison. But Paul and Silas were not affected that way. They hoped to see the goodness of the Lord while yet they were in the land of the living; and so one of them struck up a tune, and they began to sing. Life was indeed a struggle to them then, but they set it to music and made a hymn of it, and God did not fail them. Before the morning came, the stocks and the chains and the dungeon were a thing of the past, and the jailer and his family had been won by their cheerfulness and courageous Christian experience to believe in and love the Christ whom they served.

Another cordial to give where there are symptoms of fainting is a breathing out of the heart in prayer to God. However hard the way may be, however perplexing, we may be sure that God is not taken unawares, and that he is not discouraged. When Sheridan came back from Winchester on his famous ride and found his soldiers defeated and fainting, the thing that nerved them to rally again and win victory out of defeat was the fact that they saw at a glance that their leader was not discouraged. In his flashing eye, courageous voice, and attitude of dauntless heroism, they saw the hope of triumph, and they were willing to follow him anywhere. Meditation on God and prayer to him has the same effect upon us. God is not disheartened nor defeated, and as we commune with him

his courage is breathed into our hearts, and we rally again to continue the battle to victory. How clearly Isaiah brings this out when he says: "Hast thou not known? hast thou not heard, that the everlasting God, the Lord, the Creator of the ends of the earth, fainteth not, neither is weary? there is no searching of his understanding. He giveth power to the faint; and to them that have no might he increaseth strength. Even the youths shall faint and be weary, and the young men shall utterly fall: but they that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings as eagles; they shall run, and not be weary; and they shall walk, and not faint."

Christ, during his earthly life, when he was giving out all day long encouragement and good cheer to the multitudes of sick and sorrowing people who thronged about him during the popular epoch of his ministry, used often to feel the need of being refreshed in this way, and when the crowds had gone to their homes, he would go away into the mountains and spend many hours, sometimes the entire night, in secret prayer and devotion, filling his great soul with the consciousness of the Father's sympathy and interest in his work of salvation. "The servant is not greater than his Lord." If Jesus Christ could not carry our human body, and share our grief, and bear our sufferings without being supported by seasons of prayer, and by living constantly in the spirit of prayer, then it is not astonishing if we faint by the way when we try to get along without prayer. Jesus himself said, "Men ought always to pray, and not to faint." His teaching evidently is, that by living constantly in the

spirit of prayer we shall be refreshed and encouraged so that we will not faint.

Dr. Robertson Nicoll, commenting on these words of Christ, says that the prayer which our Lord means is not the prayer so much of earthly ambition as the desire after the heavenly peace. In such prayer the exacting current of earthly desire is checked, and the heart is anchored to look out on the things of time without eagerness. How often has overwrought expectation, in every sphere, defeated itself! How often has true enjoyment come suddenly from unexpected places! When the soul lies at anchor, the anchor of hope that holds steadfast "within the veil," then it is apprehended of Christ Jesus, and filled full with a cargo of spiritual treasures. How clearly Lucy Larcom sets forth the inspiration received through prayer, in one of her songs:

"Soul of our souls, only by Thee
The way we see
Through earth's entangling mystery;
We nothing know;
But prayer unbars heaven's gate, and Thou dost show
The one sure path in which we ought to go.

The prayer of faith availeth much;
Thou hearest such;
Thy hand we in the darkness touch.
O, not apart
Stayest Thou on some high throne, all-loving Heart!
Helper in times of need we know Thou art.

Soul of our souls, with boundless cheer
Forever near,
Our being's breath and atmosphere!
The world seems bleak
Only when shelter in drear self we seek;
The joy of life is, man to Thee may speak."

Another sure source of comfort, when we are tempted to faint, is to hold ourselves steady to the thing we know to be right and which we are sure is our duty. All of us will have to work sometimes as a horse does when he is harnessed up to the load, and has no way of getting out of it except to kick the wagon to pieces. We are often tempted to balk and fly up and not pull, and thus faint by the way. We must not disdain, in such times, the blessedness of steady work, doing our duty. It is not happy like working for the love of it, but duty is a great safety valve. Duty is a harness; but it is vastly better to work in the harness than to kick over the traces and bring both ourselves and others into all sorts of trouble. Paul must have been thinking of just such a case when he said, "Let us not be weary in well doing: for in due season we shall reap, if we faint not." There will always be a demand for steady, genuine Christian pluck. We can not always live on the mountain-top. Neither will the load always run as though the wheels were oiled and the grade a little down-hill. There will be days for every one of us when, if we do right and make advancement, it will be because we push up against the collar of habit, and pull in the harness because we are accustomed to. If we keep on doing well, sustained by the consciousness that we are pulling honestly in our places, having an eye on the harvest that is to be obtained in the end, we shall be kept from fainting.

Still another source of encouragement against fainting is found in a personal love and devotion to Christ. Jesus says, speaking in the Book of Revela-

tion, through the mouth of John the Beloved, to some of his faithful disciples, "Thou . . . for my name's sake hast labored, and hast not fainted." Many another soul in every age has been kept from fainting because of love for Christ. And we have the assurance that, though we seem to fail of the great achievements which our love prompts us to win in the name of Christ, he will take the will for the deed. Robert Louis Stevenson, himself as vivid an illustration of a heroic struggle against fainting under difficulties as is afforded in modern literature, once said: "Our business in the world is not to succeed, but to continue to fail in good spirits." That is not exactly true. It is to continue to fail, if necessary, of outward achievement, without losing heart. But no man ever did really continue to fail who gave himself up in a complete self-devotion to a worthy cause. God takes care of that.

A recent writer, commenting on the death of one of the first heroic young volunteers to fall at Santiago, said that the only apprehension that he expressed on the eve of battle was that he might not share in the later conflicts and triumphs of the war. But this writer truly says that for the dead in battle there is still a recompense, a grander record than muster-rolls, and fame as enduring as history. The famous regiments of all nations are brotherhoods of the living in which the dead are specially honored. Death has no power to defeat the beneficent results of a good life. One day, as a railroad conductor was passing through the train, a gentleman who knew him ventured to express a word of sympathy with him in his sorrow for the

loss of a dear little girl, not over ten years of age. The gentleman was not a little touched by the conductor's reply, as his lips showed a smile, and his eye a tear, "We feel that her work was done." Her work? It could be only to win their hearts, and make everybody love her for her innocence and sweetness. And yet, after all, that was a great work, and death had no power to rob the beautiful life of its rich reward in the comfort and blessing of these lives she had touched.

I must speak of one other unfailing source of comfort to the soul that is tempted to faint, and that is a spirit of helpfulness and sympathy with the sorrows and troubles of other people. Paul gives that as one of his reasons for not fainting. Writing to the Corinthians, and telling them of his great interest in them, he says: "For all things are for your sakes, that the abundant grace might through the thanksgiving of many redound to the glory of God. For which cause we faint not." There is no greater health-lift for the soul than to stretch out a helping hand to a brother that is weaker than ourselves, and save him from fainting. Notwithstanding all the losses in battle throughout the entire Civil War, two men died of disease in camps to one who died of wounds received in conflict. And it is nearly always the case that the regiments who do not have a chance to fight bring home the fewest soldiers with them when the war is over.

A beautiful thing happened on one of the transports coming from Santiago to Montauk Point, New York, with a load of sick soldiers, whose only hope

of life was the cooler air and the healthier surroundings of the Northern camp. On board the ship was the bugler of one of the Ohio regiments who was the youngest soldier in the army. He was almost dead with the fever, and the only chance of recovery was in a speedy journey to the North. He was very popular among the men, and the doctors watched him with unusual care. But the ship was heavy and slow, and made poor time. The doctor told the men that if they were on a fast ship he thought the bugler would live to reach the camp, and would probably get well, but could not last the trip through at the rate they were going. Then the soldiers found out that there was an idle engine in the ship that was not being used because they were short-handed for workers; and these men, who were sick themselves, not well enough to do guard duty, divided themselves into shifts, started that old engine going, and took turns shoveling coal, like stokers, day and night, that the little bugler might have a better chance for life. They won the race with death, and the bugler is getting well, and will come home with his regiment. But that is not all the story, for it is said that these men, who thus forgot themselves to work for another, were themselves helped by it, and came to the end of the trip in much better spirits than those who cared only for themselves and were busy nursing their own ills. All life is built on that plan. God has so made us that a brotherly hand stretched out to the weak reacts in sympathy and inspiration and encouragement on our own fainting hearts.

To summarize our study this morning, we have but to recall Mrs. Farningham's song of the "Com-

panions" necessary to a happy and victorious Christian life:

"Let Prayer

Go with thee everywhere
To voice for thee thy soul's desire,
To bid faith grow and hope aspire,
Amid the silences to speak
Of joy when troubled, strength when weak,
For burdens shrink, mists disappear,
Flowers live, and skies are blue and clear,
And glory lights up care

Through Prayer.

Take Peace

To keep when joys increase ;
She will lead on to tranquil ways,
Her gentle love will bless thy days ;
She, where through leaves the sunshine gleams,
Will give thee rest by gentle streams,
Will guide thee to the paths of light,
Will sing sweet songs to thee at night,
Will make all discords cease ;

Take Peace.

Let Trust

Go wheresoe'er thou must,
For Trust will teach thee how to trace
The love upon thy brother's face ;
Trust will reveal to thee the best
In shower and sun, in work or rest.
When thou art sad and fain to weep,
Kind Trust will kiss thee into sleep.
To keep thee wise and just

Take Trust.

Take Love,

All other friends above.
For Love will change the darkest day
To summer noon and flower-filled way ;
And love does more than crowns of gold
To gladden hearts of young and old.
And whoso walks with Love beside,
On lonely moor, by swelling tide,
Finds earth like heaven above—

Take Love."

VII

The Banishment of Tears

God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes.

—*Rev. vii, 17.*

THIS is the climax of one of the most splendid paragraphs in the Bible. All the sentences that go before this lead up to it. The banishment of tears is the result of the banishment of hunger and thirst and loneliness and sin. It is the goal toward which humanity is painfully toiling.

It will be interesting to note the methods by which God proposes to banish tears. It is to be brought about by the doing away of those things which cause tears. Hunger is to perish. I suppose that does not appeal very strongly to many of us. Perhaps few of us have ever felt the pangs of real hunger of the body. We have thought we were hungry sometimes, when we had fasted long enough to have a good appetite, just enough to give us good zest for food. But it meant a great deal among the poor people to whom Christ ministered in his earthly life, and to whom the early disciples carried the message of their Lord; and, alas! it means a great deal yet to a majority of mankind. Even in our time, in India and Cuba, and in other parts of the earth, hundreds of thousands of people have died of starvation. It is probably true that more than one-half of all the people who live on the earth do not know what it is to have all they want to eat. Probably every second man in the world lies down to

sleep hungry every night. What a source of tears! The cry for bread is going up from wasted and despoiled human life from all lands.

There are many tears shed on account of hunger in our own great cities. W. A. Wyckoff, in that brilliant book, "The Workers," draws a tragic sketch of a scene in a Chicago sweat-shop, much like many that I have witnessed in other cities:

"As we neared the door, there was the usual sound of the clattering rush of sewing-machines going at high speed—starting and stopping abruptly, at uneven intervals, and giving you the impression, in the meantime, of racing furiously with one another.

"The opened door revealed the customary sight of a room perhaps twenty feet square, with daylight entering faintly through two unwashed windows, which looked out upon the level of the street. The dampness showed itself in dew-like beads along the walls and on the ceiling, which I could easily reach as I stood erect. In spite of its being winter, the dingy walls were dotted with black flies, which swarmed most about a cooking-stove, over which, stirring a steaming pot, stood a ragged, disheveled woman, who looked as though she could never have known any but extreme old age. In the remaining floor-space were crowded a dozen machines or more, over which, in the thick, unventilated atmosphere, were the bending figures of the workers. Oil-lamps lit up the inner recesses of the room, and seemed to lend consistency to the heavy air. Not a head was turned to see who had entered, and the whirr of feverish work went on unchecked for an instant by our coming.

"In a corner, a group of girls were sewing. The oldest among them may have been twelve, and the youngest could have been a little over eight, and their wages averaged about seventy-five cents a week for hours that varied widely according to the stress of work.

"We were on the point of leaving when a heavy footfall sounded on the wooden steps, and the door opened to the touch of an inspecting officer, whose glowing health and neat, warm uniform were as though a prosperous breeze were sweeping the stagnant room. The work, however, was as unaffected by his coming as it had been by ours. Not a sewer noticed him, and the stitching of machines went racing on with unabated swiftness. Only 'the old man' watched nervously the movements of the officer as he walked about the shop making note of the bad air and the filth upon the floors, and the group of little girls, and the dark, un-ventilated chamber beyond. . . .

" 'Look here,' I could hear him say, 'you 've got to clean up here, and right away. The first thing you know you 'll start a fever that will sweep the city before we can stop it.'

"The young Hebrew had stopped his work, and turned half round in his chair until he faced the officer. There were deep lines in his haggard, beardless face, and his wolfish eyes were ablaze with the sense of sharp injustice.

" 'You tell us we 've got to keep clean,' he answered, in broken English, lifting his voice to a shout above the clatter of machines. 'What time have we to keep clean when it 's all we can do to get bread? Do n't

talk to us about disease; it's bread we're after, bread! And there sounded in the voice of the boy the cry of the hungry for food, which no man hears and can ever forget.

"The officer passed, speechless, up the steps, and we followed into the clean, pure air, under the boundless blue of smiling skies."

Even in our own midst there is, no doubt, every day, more than one family where tears are wrung from the very heart because of the cruel pangs of hunger. How the world would be brightened if it could be said of its inhabitants, everywhere, now, "They shall hunger no more!" God is working in this world to bring about that result. Do not for a moment think it is only his purpose to let men cease to hunger when they get to heaven, for wherever Christianity goes there are fewer tears because of hunger. It is not only that the strong bear the burdens of the weak; it is not only that the hand of charity is reached out to stay the ravages of hunger and famine; but the result of Christianity everywhere is to give man power over nature, to enable him to win from the earth and the sea greater resources for food, and steadily to bring into fuller fellowship rich and poor, and to help the toiling masses to a fairer share in the good things of the earth. And despite all the wrongs that come through greed in great aggregations of wealth, despite the fact that the great factors of the world's food are many times wickedly used to enrich the few by robbing the many, it still remains true that the world steadily gets to be a better place to live in for the working multitude, and there are less tears on account of hunger every year.

Thirst, too, has had its share in causing tears. We know little about it, but in those hot lands which gave us the Bible, where rivers were far apart and wells were scarce, thirst was one of the great foes of human life. A recent traveler in the East says that the Egyptian never travels without his goolah. He fills it with filtered water, and in the morning can command a pint or more of water cooled by evaporation through the unglazed clay. This precious fluid he does not waste by drinking. Taking off the long, white wrap and the piece of cloth covering his head during sleep, the native pours the water over his head, neck, and hands. There are in Egypt, he says, as many thirsts as plagues, but the dust-thirst is the worst. Every pore is sealed; the throat is a lump of dry clay, and one feels what it must be to be a mummy. But thirst is to become an enemy of the past even in this world. The artesian wells of modern science bring up streams out of the heart of the desert. God is giving man living fountains of waters in what were once waste places. The modern water-systems in our cities, that bring abundance of water into every house however humble, at an expense within the reach of the poorest, are a part of the process by which God is banishing thirst from the earth.

And when we spiritualize these words, and make them refer to that deeper hunger and thirst for the bread of life and the water of life, we have still the assurance that the day will come when we shall be satisfied. Many who have never known what hunger or thirst is to the body, have been starved all their lives for love and appreciation, have thirsted for the sweet peace of holy fellowship; but these shall be satis-

fied, and in that new earth and new heaven toward which we are marching we shall hunger and thirst no more. During the Franco-Prussian war a wounded German soldier in his agony crawled out from the hospital-tent in the night, and dragged his maimed body over the frozen ground through the street. A kind-hearted French woman had him carried into her house, and held a glass of refreshing drink to his lips burning with fever, even while the rest of the body was so cold. But he shook his head, and murmured, "No, no! I am only thirsty for my home and my children." And the poor fellow died with that thirst unassuaged. These tender thirsts shall be satisfied in that land where He that sitteth on the throne shall dwell among his people, and where the sorrows and separations which make earth a vale of tears shall never be known.

The joys of the earthly life are transient, but the joys of the spiritual life are eternal. Half the gladness of the pleasant experiences of this life is taken from them by the consciousness that they are but for a moment. Here we have no abiding city, but are always in a hurry. How blest the day when we shall have time enough for peace!

A lady went, one morning just before breakfast-time, to answer a timid knock at her front door, and, opening it, saw before her a beautiful Italian boy, perhaps ten years old, looking as if he had just stepped from the canvas of a Raphael. His soft eyes, his tangled hair, his trustful smile, won her instantly; and when he stated in a voice as lovely as his face that he was hungry, she ordered everything in the house to

be set before him. He ate with deliberate and comprehensive appetite, while she sat at his side, rewarded, occasionally, by a flash of the same seraphic smile. Even breakfast has its limitations, and she at last dismissed him from the door with a sigh of regret. Happening to go out some two hours later, she found him sitting peacefully on the steps, smiling upon her as trustfully as before. "Why," she said with surprise, "I thought you had gone away long ago!" "O no," he said in the same heavenly voice. "What for go away? Plenty time to go away!"

Alas, that we are compelled to leave the joys of life so soon, and in the rush and hurry of the world lose the sweetest pleasures for lack of time to enjoy them! There will be time enough in the heavenly world to absorb the joys of those divine fellowships of which God has given us a foretaste here.

Sin shall cease out of God's universe, and with that shall go the greatest cause of all for tears. War shall cease, perhaps sooner than we anticipate. It seems strange to prophesy it before our armies are yet mustered out from a bloody war, and yet our war against Spain is one of the tokens of the end of war in the earth. We went to war to stop a war. For many years war had been going on pitilessly, cruelly, the strong wasting the weak, causing rivers of tears to flow; and for humanity's sake, to stop such a war of ravage, the Star-spangled Banner was unfurled in war.

It is not strange that this example of the United States in interfering in behalf of the weak and oppressed should have been so speedily followed by the

young Czar of Russia in a proposal for the disarmament of the great nations and the ushering in of an age of peace.

Who would have dared predict, a little while ago, that such a proposition would come so soon, and last of all from a Russian Czar? And yet how appropriate that it should come from perhaps the most powerful military nation in the world! Some people sneer at the Czar and call him a dreamer; but Joseph was a dreamer; Daniel was a dreamer; Columbus was a dreamer; William Lloyd Garrison and Wendell Phillips were dreamers; and Jesus Christ was the greatest dreamer of them all. And the Czar of Russia, in proposing to do away with war, is only seeking to fulfill a dream of Jesus of Nazareth. It is certain that so sure as God is God, and man is man, men will not go on much longer murdering one another under the name of war. The tears that fall in every land because of the gigantic armies of the nations are formidable pleaders, and in the fortresses of earth God is already breeding the doves of peace.

Dr. John White Chadwick was at West Point last June, and saw a bluebird's nest in an unfilled bomb-shell, and went away to sing a song about it which, under the inspiration of the Czar's proposal for universal peace, might have a world-wide application,—

“A summer's day in leafy June,
The birds were all in sweetest tune,
The roses at their best;
But fairest of all things to see,
That perfect day in June, for me,
A bluebird's peaceful nest.

I found it in a hollow shell
Which crowned, as I remember well,
 A shapely pyramid.
Five little eggs were also there,—
Blue as the sky when 't is most fair,—
 Half in the grasses hid.

O, favored shell! whose kindred went
On cruel errands to be sent,—
 To mutilate and kill;
Whilst thou, removed from all the strife,
Dost feel with love and dawning life
 Thy bosom gently thrill.

I said, 'This thing which here I see
Shall be a precious prophecy
 Of what the world shall win,
When all the days of war shall cease,
And all the blessed years of peace
 Shall gloriously begin.'

And better yet: peace *after* war
Hath many an ugly rent and scar
 For time to smooth away;
But peace *in* war doth not await
A blessing coming, slow and late,
 Its blessing is to-day.

My bird's nest in the hollow shell—
A heaven miniature in hell—
 Shall symbol be of this:
That in and through and over all,
Whatever seeming curse befall,
 God's love forever is.

He doth not wait till war is done,
And all its barren victories won,
 To enter at the door;
But in the furnace of the strife
He bears for aye a charmed life,
 And blesses evermore.

Deep at the heart of all our pain,
In loss as surely as in gain,
His love abideth still.
Let come what will, my feet shall stand
On this firm rock at his right hand:
'Father, it is thy will.'

All those sins of self-indulgence which blacken character and fill the earth with tears are to be overcome. In John's vision he saw that the tearless ones were arrayed in white robes, and when he questioned about it, the answer was, "They have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb." Think of the tears caused by drunkenness; by anger; by jealousy; by envy; by greed and selfish ambition—but all these dark spots are to be cleansed from the human heart, and the tears which they cause are to be wiped away. Think of what it would be to have a world without a workhouse, without a police court, without a prison, without a penitentiary; for all these come because of sin.

The whole universe shall feel the touch of that new life; for as wickedness and sin die, every living thing feels the blessedness of man's whitened character. The birds of the air and the beasts of the field shall rejoice at man's redemption. A gentleman was watching the gathering host of birds who make their homes in the big chimney of a New York church as they circled over Trinity Cemetery. Near him was a white-haired old man, leaning against a tree and gazing upward at the thousands of swallows. Suddenly the old man addressed him.

"What a beautiful sight that is!" he said. "I have watched these flights for years. During the summer the birds come every evening about six o'clock, and for an hour or more fly in that swift circle overhead before seeking rest."

"Why have they chosen this spot?" the gentleman asked.

"It has been their haunt for many years," said the old man. "I like to think it is because their friend sleeps yonder. Can you see that monument?"

He pointed with his stick through the massive iron fence that surrounds the cemetery. In the gathering dusk there could be made out a great white cross, on a high pedestal, glimmering in the twilight.

"That is in memory of Audubon," said the old man. "On one side of that cross are the sculptured forms of many birds and the inscription, 'O all ye fowls and birds of the air, bless ye the Lord! Praise him, and magnify him forever!' Beneath that is a bas-relief portrait in bronze and the dates of his birth and death. On the other side of the monument are the words, 'O all ye animals of the earth, bless ye the Lord! Praise him and magnify him forever!'"

It will be a sweet time in God's universe after a while, when sin is destroyed and all fountains of tears are dried up. Though we are often tempted to be discouraged at what seems to be the neglect and indifference of the people concerning the great facts of Christianity, yet there are no other truths that attract such universal interest. The world has many songs, but the songs that are best known are those which tell

of the struggle to overcome sin through Jesus Christ. A correspondent writing home from Santiago said that at night in camp if you wanted several hundred or a thousand men to sing one song, it had to be a hymn or a Sunday-school song. Almost every man in the army was able to sing the first verse of "America." Nearly everybody could sing the first verse and chorus of "Suwanee River." But when some one started up "Rock of Ages," "Hold the Fort," "Just as I am, without one plea," or "Jesus loves even me," the whole regiment would join as one man, and sing the song with vigor and delight. What a proof of the dispersion of gospel truth and the widespread faith that Christ is the mighty Conqueror of sin!

It is our great mission as Christians to work together with God in this supreme purpose of the ages to banish tears from human eyes. Let us not put off making people happy until they get to heaven. Let us seek, through the grace of God, to bring peace to weary hearts here and now. Let us not wait till men and women are dead to show the sympathy and kindness that is in our hearts, but show the kind spirit and do the deed that will dry their tears and encourage their souls while they live.

A trolley-car the other day was delayed for a long time at an intersecting street that a funeral-train might pass. While waiting, one of the passengers gave food for thought by remarking so that all could hear: "This is a pretty long wait for a dead man. If he had been alive the motorman would have run over him long ago." What a sad vein of truth there is in that! We

are ready to give people more courtesy and kindness when they die than we are while they are alive.

"What silences we keep, year after year!
With those who are most near to us and dear!
We live beside each other day by day
And speak of myriad things, but seldom say
The full, sweet word that lies just in our reach
Beneath the commonplace of common speech.

Then out of sight and out of reach they go—
Those close, familiar friends who loved us so;
And sitting in the shadow they have left,
Alone with loneliness, and sore bereft,
We think with vain regret of some fond word
That once we might have said, and they have heard.

For weak and poor the love that we expressed
Now seems, beside the vast, sweet unexpressed;
And slight the deeds we did to those undone;
And small the service spent to treasures won;
And undeserved the praise for word and deed
That should have overflowed the simple need.

This is the cruel cross of life, to be
Full-visioned only when the ministry
Of death has been fulfilled, and in the place
Of some dear presence is but empty space.
What recollected service e'er can then
Give consolation for the might have been?"

But we need not be storing up for ourselves such regrets. A woman who had many sorrows and heavy burdens to bear, but who was noted for her cheerful spirit, once said in explanation: "You know I have had no money. I had nothing to give but myself; and so I made the resolution that I would never sadden any

one else with my troubles. I have laughed and told jokes when I could have wept. I have always smiled in the face of every misfortune. I have tried never to let any one go from my presence without a happy word or a bright thought to carry with them. And happiness makes happiness. I myself am happier than I would have been had I sat down and bemoaned my fate."

Such souls hasten the coming of that glad day when it shall be said of ransomed and redeemed humanity, "God has wiped away all tears from their eyes." Let us take courage, not only for ourselves, but for our race. "Weeping may endure for a night, but joy cometh in the morning."

VIII

An Illuminated Life

Now are ye light in the Lord.—*Ephesians v, 8.*

THE most majestic declaration in the Old Testament Scriptures is the Word of the Almighty at creation, "Let there be light: and there was light." If one will let the imagination play upon the dark chaos of that early night, which was blacker than any night since there has been a day—a night without stars or moon—the stupendous change that was wrought when sun and moon and stars rolled into being, conquering the darkness before them, may to some extent be conceived. The most splendid statements in the New Testament Scriptures are the saying of Jesus, "I am the Light of the world," and the scarcely less glorious words of John, "God is light, and in him is no darkness at all."

There is no more sublime prophecy of the greatness of man's inheritance as the son of God than the promise of Jesus and the apostles that the light of God, which shone in the face of Jesus Christ, which transfigured his life with glory, is to illuminate the life of every sincere disciple of Christ. We are called the "children of the Light;" Christ says of us, "Ye are the light of the world;" and Paul, speaking to these Ephesians, who had been sinful, and whose hearts and lives had been dark and forbidding, rejoices over them

with great joy because, he says, "Now are ye light in the Lord," and he urges upon them that they shall live up to this high and glorious illumination which has come into their lives, and "walk as children of the Light," for, he says, "The fruit of the Spirit is in all goodness and righteousness and truth; proving what is acceptable unto the Lord. And have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather reprove them." There is no reproof of darkness so great as the light; so there is no reproof of sin so striking as goodness. Anger and hate never look so loathsome as when we see them in contrast with love and sympathy. The gloomy jaws of doubt and fear never appear so ugly as in contrast with the smiling countenance of faith and hope.

How noble, then, is our theme, and how glorious beyond compare the lot of the men and women who give themselves up completely to be illuminated by the light of God! Let us study together with grateful hearts some of the characteristics of this illuminated life. In the first place, it is a strong life; it does not go with doubt or hesitation, like those who stumble in the dark, for the path is lighted up before it, and it can step out with vigorous feet. The Christian life is the strong life of the world. We are servants and friends of One whose power and wisdom is unlimited.

In the Cologne Cathedral there is a rude image of oak bearing the marks of extreme age, representing a giant with a child upon his shoulder. "Who is this?" the traveler asked of the sacristan, and he answers, "This is Offero, the man in search of a master." Then he relates the story: Offero would serve

only the mightiest. He offered himself to the greatest of earthly kings, and served him well until, on a certain occasion in the banquet-hall, the name of Satan was mentioned, whereat the king turned pale and trembled. "Why art thou frightened, O king?" he asked. "Because this is the prince of darkness, and he is mightier than I." Then Offero went in search of the prince of darkness, and found him without difficulty. He entered his service, and all went well until, as they were journeying on the highway, they came to the cross-roads, where stood a crucifix. There Satan fell a-trembling, and refused to pass on. "Why art thou afraid?" asked Offero. "Because this is the Christ, who rules in heaven and suffered on the cross for men, and he is mightier than I." So Offero gave himself up to the service of Christ, and never needed to change masters again, for he had found Him who was Lord over all.

The illuminated man lives not only a strong life because he has a strong Lord and Master, but because he perceives through this gracious life that has come to him the strong and eternal qualities of his own inner nature. He is able to judge clearly as to the infinite superiority of unseen and spiritual things over those which are seen and temporal.

Worldly people, whose hearts are unilluminated by light from heaven, put their attention and care on the life that is transient and must soon perish. Some years ago in one of our Eastern cities a workman who had saved up considerable money and had an interesting, growing family, decided to buy a home. He heard of a public auction where a plot of ground and a rather

run-down house was for sale at a point convenient to his employment. He concluded to buy the property and do the work of fixing up the house at odd hours and evenings, and in that way secure a pleasant home for his family.

The day of sale arrived, and the property was knocked down to him. Every spare hour, night and day for many weeks, found him hard at work about the new place. He put a new fence around the house; the shutters were put in shape; the broken window-panes were replaced; the old wall-paper was torn off and new and artistic paper put on; the garden was looked after, and the whole establishment beautified up to the fullest extent of the happy owner's finances and personal ability.

Finally the family moved in, and greatly rejoiced in the new home. A few months after, one afternoon, the front door-bell rang, and the mistress of the house, opening the door, was confronted by a lady who asked permission to step into the house and inspect the premises. As the request came in somewhat of a mandatory tone, she hesitated a moment, when the lady explained by saying: "It's all right; I am the owner of the house."

"But you must be mistaken," responded the mistress of the house. "This house is ours. My husband bought it and improved it, and we have lived here for some time."

"Surely, there must be some mistake," said the visitor. "I know this house is mine. It has been in the family for nearly half a century, and nothing could ever induce us to part with it."

The workman's wife finally said: "You had better come and see my husband. He bought the house, and he knows all about it, and if you have any claims to the house they should be presented to him. He will be at home this evening, and if you choose you may then call."

Evening came, and with it the visitor. The owner of the house insisted that the visitor must be mistaken. He had purchased the house, had found it in a dilapidated condition, had gradually improved it, investing all his own money and some that he had borrowed, besides much of his time, and could bring any number of witnesses to testify to the correctness of his assertions.

Finally the lady said, "Have you the deed and title?"

"O yes," replied he, and immediately proceeded to a desk from which he took the required papers.

In the deed was a diagram setting forth the exact location and dimensions of the property, and on a close investigation it was discovered that the house which the workman had bought was one very similar to this in appearance, but located a quarter of a mile distant, and that, consequently, he had painted and papered and improved the wrong house; and as he had gone into the enterprise beyond his own personal means, ruin now stared him in the face.

You are tempted at once to say, "Why was he not more careful? Why did he not make sure before he had invested so deeply?" But do not those questions condemn many of you for your own conduct? How many there are who are taking the most generous care

of their bodies, living on the fat of the land, careful about their food and their clothing, year after year laying out all their resources to make the body as beautiful and attractive and comfortable as possible, who at the great judgment-day will realize that they have painted, papered, and improved the house which was perishable and which must go back again to dust, and have neglected to look after the spiritual house in which they might have rejoiced forever. The divinely-illuminated soul appreciates the value of the spirit, and seeks to adorn it with all the spiritual graces. O that God may light up all our natures so that we may not fail eternally for lack of spiritual perception!

The illuminated life is a steadfast and abiding life. It is the same to-day and to-morrow; no clouds can drape it with gloom. There is in it a light which can steadily disperse the darkness day by day. Reliable lives are greatly in demand in this world. Unfortunately, the number of people who can not be depended upon is altogether too large. A colored porter once expressed doubt as to whether a certain collector would obtain what was owing to him from a business concern. "Why not?" asked the collector. "They have some assets." "Yes, sir," replied the porter. "Dey have some, but dey is n't equal to dah unreliabilities." The "unreliabilities" of many people are indeed very great. But a genuine Christian life has an illumination of hope and courage that will stand steadfast.

Marcus Aurelius, the imperial philosopher, gives a beautiful illustration of how we should keep to our standard of life through all discouragements. He says

that the purple thread that distinguished the imperial robes of the ancient kings from all others could be dragged through the mud or soaked in brine, yet never lose its color. It seemed to say to itself through all things, "I must be purple, and keep my color," and it remained imperial as long as it held together. So our principles and aims should always "keep their color" whatever circumstances we may be forced to pass through.

This illuminated life is given the bright color of the light which has shown into it. No man can steadily see the bright side of life unless he sees it through this radiant light. Some people are always looking at the negative side of things. "John," said the busy mother, "put some wood in that stove, and don't grumble about it." "Why, mother," was the reply, "you know I would just as lief put the wood in as not; but I vow I must grumble." And grown-up people are often like that. A gentleman said to Dr. Gray, "I wish to introduce you to my friend's wife, but you must not take offense at one thing. She will greet you with affability, and welcome you to her hospitality; but she will contradict the first statement you may make, whatever be its character or certainty." And she did. That delightful essayist, Charles Lamb, tells us that in his boyhood he was a diligent reader of the old family Bible, under every verse of whose text was printed a comment consisting of "objection" and "refutation of objection." Like the paired animals that went into Noah's ark, so throughout the whole Bible marched assertion and denial, until, as Lamb says, he got into the habit of looking for the objection

whenever the Bible was mentioned or quoted. So there are souls so turned away from the sunshine of hope and courage that they stand, as Oliver Wendell Holmes used to say, "at an acute angle with all the rest of the world." In the most beautiful day in summer they will meet your pleasant salutation of, "A beautiful morning," with the opposite declaration that "there are signs of rain before night." If you joyously congratulate them on their wholesome, healthy appearance, you are told, with a gloomy look of despair, that they "have not been well for weeks." The most precious ointment of life, for them, has in it some dead fly; and the fairest flower in earth's garden some gnawing worm at the bud.

A most remarkable convent is to be found in the catacombs of the Russian cathedral at Kiev. Deep down beneath the magnificent cathedral are miles of subterranean corridors, lined with the cells in which fifteen hundred ascetics perform their daily devotions and duties, live, eat, and sleep in the grim company of their dead predecessors. For a short time each day they ramble in the beautiful gardens surrounding the cathedral, only to return from the fugitive glimpse of Paradise to the dark, damp cellars where they live their "death in life." The building which rises above them is of a splendor of which the untraveled Westerner has no conception. Its walls are covered with plaques of gold and silver. The images are enshrined in richly-jeweled frames of gold, and before them hang hundreds of tiny lamps gleaming like multi-colored jewels. Like that gloomy life of these monks, catching only a glimpse now and then

of the heaven of beauty above, and going back for the most part into the hell of the darkness beneath, is many a human life lived in this world. But, thank God, that is not his plan for us, and it is not necessary for any of us. It is possible that the most gloomy and discouraged soul may become so illuminated by the presence of Christ that it shall live all the day long in the Paradise above, in a world lighted up with hope and courage because it is God's world. Hours of depression and gloom are unworthy of us, and are a sure indication of some failure on our own part to surrender ourselves completely to the incoming of the light of the upper sky. If every room in our heart and life is not illuminated, it is because we have ignorantly or selfishly bolted some door against it. Open the shutters, throw wide the door, and let in all the light of heaven!

The illuminated life is not forever longing for the forbidden things of sin. A life only half-lighted has still many associations and affiliations with the darkness; but a heart thoroughly illuminated knows that God pays much better than the devil, and that the pleasures of goodness are infinitely more to be desired than the wages of sin.

A bright boy, one of the pages in the United States Senate at Washington, was at one of the Senate entrances when a lady approached with a visiting-card in her hand.

"Will you hand this to Senator Blank?" she said.

"I can not," replied the boy. "All cards must be taken to the east lobby."

The woman was inclined to be angry, and went

away muttering. Then a thought struck her, and taking out her pocket-book she found a twenty-five-cent piece, and with it in her hand she went back to the boy.

"Here, my lad," she said, in a coaxing tone, "here is a quarter to take my card in."

"Madam," said the boy, without a moment's hesitation, "I am paid a larger salary than that to keep the cards out."

So any truly-illuminated soul knows that God is a better paymaster than the devil. When I see a man who professes to be a follower of Christ taking the devil's tips, I know that, though he walks under the banner of light, his soul is still unlighted by the fire from above.

The Christ-illuminated life will behold clearly the value of fellow-immortals who may be influenced by them to salvation. One of the most heroic of all the struggles connected with the Spanish War has happened since the war in the effort to bring the Spanish cruiser *Maria Teresa* to an American port. She was caught in a terrible storm, and the great waves crushing against her side forced their way between the plates shaken by the explosions of the famous battle off Santiago, and leaks started everywhere. The roll of the ship threw the captain against the chain and disabled him. Water flowed into the fire-rooms below. The coal was washed out of the bunkers by the pitching of the ship, and choked up the pumps. The hopeless struggle was kept up for hours, but at last the commanding officer ordered the transfer of the crew to the towboats. The *Vulcan* held on to the

sinking ship with a tow-line until all hope was abandoned. Then the hawser was slipped, and the proud cruiser, whose cost had been three million dollars, was abandoned to the mercies of the storm. It is a heroic tale of determination, of daring; of heroism equal in courage with anything that was done in the heat of battle during the war. And yet it was all done for a mass of steel and wood and to feed the national pride. In the light of such devotion for such a purpose, how great ought to be our courage, our heroism, our self-denial, in our efforts to tow the immortal ship of a human soul into the haven of safety!

It is only as we see life in the light of Christ that it is possible for us to appreciate as we ought the worth of an immortal soul. The need of the hour is for illuminated lives which see the value of men and women so clearly that they will work and plan and suffer—and die, if need be, with all joy—for the salvation of sinners. A great many excuses are made to justify the Church of our time against the small number of conversions and the slow progress we are making in winning the world to Christ. We lay it to the materialistic spirit of the age, worldliness among the people, widespread skepticism, and all that sort of thing. But such reasons are futile; we do not begin to encounter the obstacles that Paul and his helpers did in the early days of Christianity, and yet he declared that he was more than conqueror through Christ, and that He enabled him to triumph in every place. We do not begin to meet with the opposition that the Wesleys and Whitefield and their fellow-workers met in the early days of Methodism. Why,

then, do we not win greater conquests? Why is a Church of a thousand people ready to congratulate itself over one or two hundred accessions to its membership in a year? There can be no doubt that, in spite of all the excuses we make, the real reason lies in the fact that we do not supremely desire the salvation of men; we do not see that it is worth more than making money to save men from sin; we do not clearly perceive that a soul plucked from the eternal burning is a jewel more precious than any diamond that ever shone in an imperial crown. God make us to see! Pour upon us Thy light! Illuminate our souls, till we shall see things as they are, and labor for the things that never rust or die!

To live in such a light, to be illuminated and glorified by such a light, requires us to be united in personal fellowship with Jesus Christ. Paul says, "Now are ye light in the Lord." As Dr. Maclaren says, it is evident that the reason why so many Christian people do not grow and blaze with this spiritual illumination is because there is no depth and reality of union between them and Jesus Christ; and there is no depth or reality of union between them and Jesus Christ because they have no strength of faith. Taking Christ as our Savior is not merely getting escape from hell or securing forgiveness for our sins; that faith is essential, but it is needful that there may be flowing into our hearts evermore that which will change our darkness into radiance of light. Take a lesson from your electric lights; the instant that you break the contact, that instant the flame disappears. And the instant a man loses touch of Jesus Christ in

his daily thinking and living, that instant does his spiritual light, the light of his hope and his joy and his courage, die down into darkness, and he becomes as monstrous and abnormal a spectacle as if the sun, a few degrees above the horizon, were to turn and go back into the night from which it had just emerged.

The first thing, then, and the most important thing of all life to us, is to keep up our union with Christ; and that is done by thinking about him, by meditating on him, by filling our minds and hearts with him and seeking to please him. If we do this, and surrender ourselves to do his will, the light of heaven shall so fill our hearts that we shall be "as the sun shineth in his strength."

IX

The Buried Treasures of the Soul

But he that received one went and digged in the earth, and hid his Lord's money.—*Matthew xxv, 18.*

OLIVER CROMWELL was visiting on one occasion one of the great churches of England, when he discovered, in the niches of one of its chapels, a number of silver statues. "What are these?" demanded he sternly of the trembling dean who was showing him around the church. "Please, your Highness," was the reply, "they are the twelve apostles." "The twelve apostles, are they? Well, take them away at once, and melt them down and coin them into money, that, like their Master, they may go about doing good." Our talents were given us, not for our own pleasure simply, but that we may use them for helpful service in supplying humanity's need.

The passage of Scripture we are to study is suggestive of the fact that many people hide their talents, bury them out of sight, because they seem small and insignificant. The temptation is to feel that, because one can not do large things, therefore it is not worth while to attempt to do anything. There is one point of un wisdom in this to which I think attention is not very frequently called, and that is that no man knows how great are the possibilities of development of his ability for noble service until he has brought it to light and given it a chance for growth in the world's

market-place. There have been many men and women who were hopeless about themselves so long as their talents remained buried, but who, becoming aroused by some divine hope, brought their treasures to light, and found that their one talent was a seed which had the power to multiply itself when given opportunity to breathe the air and to receive the revivifying kiss of the sunshine.

Horace Bushnell used to say that he regarded the talent of growth as the greatest talent of all. He said there were some who excelled in school, and gave the highest promise in their first efforts, but they soon reached their limit. They appeared to have all the talents, and have them in full order, but the law of growth seemed to be wanting. The capital was good enough, but was so invested as to gather no interest. It seemed that their mind grew as long as their bodies did, but the growth of the brain stopped with the growth of the muscles.

But, as Bushnell splendidly suggests, there is a much greater possibility for human souls who have caught the real spirit of this immortal race upon which we have entered. To such men and women force makes force. What they gather seems to enlarge their very brain. At first nobody thought of them as having much promise. They were put down among the mediocrities. But while the others are flagstaffs only, these become trees with wide-spreading branches. By and by it begins to be seen that they move. Somebody finally speaks to them. Their sentinels are growing bigger; their opinions are getting weight; ideas are breaking in and imaginations breaking out; and the

internal styles of their souls, thus lifted, lifts the sense of position, and then a certain majesty of consciousness adds weight to their speech, and, finally, the wonderful thing about them is, that they keep growing, confounding all expectations, getting all the while more breadth and richness, and covering life even toward its close with a certain evergreen freshness that is admirable and beautiful to behold. Men who are disheartened before the battle opens, who bury their treasures in the earth rather than risk them in the exchange, fail to take into account the remarkable growth and development which come to earnest souls when once they are put into action and begin to gather velocity and power in movement.

In his new book on Rome, Marion Crawford, with that sort of poetic and prophetic insight which is the supreme talent of the great novelist, says: "The really great man gathers power in action; the average successful man expends it." What the world is hunting for in a scientific way just now is an invention by which electricity may be gathered in a workable form while the car or locomotive is in progress; give us that, and the transportation systems of the world will be revolutionized. Whether that will ever be possible or not in the locomotion of railway cars (though I have no doubt it will be), it is a grand possibility to men and women in intellectual and moral progress. If we bring out all the treasures of the soul, and yield them as living sacrifices to God to do his will, and perform the work which needs to be done for the world's salvation, we do not lose the treasures we already have and find ourselves bankrupt like the spendthrift, but we gather force as we go, and our power

increases as we expend it with lavish hand. We gather more than we give when we give all that we have. It is the man who tries to save his life who loses it; while the man who gives his life completely not only saves it but infinitely enlarges and enriches it.

There is another common error which causes great unhappiness and sorrow in the world, and large waste of resources, and that is the belief common among men that because a man has lost the first and best chance for bringing his talents into action, through failure to obtain education in childhood or youth, it is not worth while to make serious effort for large achievement at a later date. And so there are many men of middle age who are the graveyards of great treasures, who compromise with fate and settle down to a kind of work which does not satisfy them, and live and die in their discouragement. Now the fact is that, although a failure promptly to accept the first opportunity to use our talents is a serious loss, as long as God permits a man to live in this world he is constantly giving him other opportunities, any one of which if earnestly seized and entered upon in a whole-hearted way will bring about results in glorious achievement far greater than the man himself or any of his friends would believe possible.

The late Judge John Erskine, of Georgia, ran away from home and went to sea when he was sixteen, and not being much of a sailor, was sent to the galley and made into a cook. For many years he was known as "Johnny the cook." So life went on until he was forty-five. Most men at that age would have said that the wider spheres of life were forever closed, but at

forty-five he began to read law, and his advance in his profession was so rapid that he was appointed to the judgeship of the United States Court for the Northern and Southern Districts of Georgia. After he had been judge for a year or two, he went one day to Savannah to preside over the Federal Court. One afternoon he strolled down to the docks to look at the vessels in port. The captain of one of the ships came ashore and passed the judge, giving him a sharp glance; then he retraced his steps and stared hard at the man who was enjoying the scene on the river.

"Now I'll bet that's Johnny the cook!" exclaimed the bluff old sailor.

Erskine looked at him and recognized his old captain. The two shook hands heartily, and the captain told the other how he had identified him by a scar on his face. A brief talk about old times followed, and then the captain glanced at his former cook's clothes. "You must have prospered in this country," he remarked. "What is your line of business?"

"There is a long story connected with that," replied the judge, "and as I have to meet an appointment now, I must postpone it until I see you again. Meet me in the United States Court-room to-morrow morning at ten o'clock."

The next morning at ten o'clock Judge Erskine was on the bench in his black robe, dealing out justice to a crowd of moonshiners. In a few moments the old sea-captain walked into the court-room. He glanced around in a puzzled way, and was evidently disappointed in not finding the man he sought. Finally he raised his eyes to the bench. For a moment he seemed dazed. He doubted his own eyes. Erskine

saw him and beckoned to him to come inside the railing which fenced off the lawyers from the spectators. With trembling steps the captain took his stand one step below the platform on which the judge sat. Erskine welcomed him cordially, and during some unimportant routine business told the astonished sailor about his career in America and his elevation to the bench. The captain was so thoroughly surprised by what he saw and heard that he seemed anxious to get away, and when he had reached the bottom step on leaving, he gave the judge a sweeping glance as he ejaculated, in a distinctly audible voice, "Only to think of it!"

There are many men and women of middle age who, in an intellectual and spiritual way, have fallen into the rut of believing that it is not possible for them to bring into action their talents and abilities for the best service. A man says, "I might have done it once, but youth is passed and it is too late." Of course the opportunities of youth are gone; but middle age has its opportunities, and old age has privileges that are all its own; and so long as we live in this life of probation it is our duty and our holy privilege to bring out every buried treasure of the soul and give it a chance to make itself felt in the world's work. Men count more by the energy and whole-souled fidelity which they put into their work than they do by the number of intellectual talents originally given. One talent well used, turned over many times in the year, is better than ten talents hidden away in the attic or the cellar.

There is nothing more pathetic than to reflect on the latent and dormant powers in the Christian Church to-day which, if they could only have an Easter resur-

rection and be brought into the living treasury of the Church's working capital, would speedily conquer the whole world for Christ. If each one of us will bring out of the darkness the ability to work, and bear burdens, and speak for the Lord, and devote all these idle treasures to the altar of our Church, the world will stand back amazed at the wealth of spiritual resources which we have in our congregations.

I think I ought to say a word also concerning a possible application of our text to the buried treasures of ability lying dormant in our national life, which needs to be thoroughly aroused to help solve the great problems of the world's civilization and of man's redemption. It will be the saddest national tragedy the world has ever seen if the United States shall in the end listen to the counsels of cowards, or the disturbed cries of peace-loving sluggards, or the frothy appeals of time-serving politicians, and fail to rise up to the great opportunities and privileges of the present hour, and to hold as a providential heritage all the territory gathered by the national arms in the recent war, instructing these peoples in the ways of civilization until the wilderness and the desert shall become the garden of the Lord. God help us to hear Kipling's prophetic call to

"Take up the White Man's burden—

Send forth the best ye breed—

Go bind your sons to exile

To serve your captives' need;

To wait in heavy harness,

On fluttered folk and wild—

Your new-caught sullen peoples,

Half devil and half child.

Take up the White Man's burden—

In patience to abide,
To veil the threat of terror
And check the show of pride;
By open speech and simple,
A hundred times made plain,
To seek another's profit
And work another's gain.

Take up the White Man's burden—

The savage wars of peace—
Fill full the mouth of Famine,
And bid the sickness cease;
And when your goal is nearest
(The end for others sought),
Watch sloth and heathen folly
Bring all your hope to naught.

Take up the White Man's burden—

No iron rule of kings,
But toil of serf and sweeper—
The tale of common things.
The ports ye shall not enter,
The road ye shall not tread,
Go, make them with your living
And mark them with your dead.

Take up the White Man's burden,

And reap his old reward—
The blame of those ye better,
The hate of those ye guard—
The cry of hosts ye humor
(Ah, slowly) toward the light:
'Why brought ye us from bondage,
Our loved Egyptian night.'

Take up the White Man's burden—

Ye dare not stoop to less—
Nor call too loud on Freedom
To clothe your weariness.

The Lord's Arrows

By all ye will or whisper,
By all ye leave or do,
The silent sullen peoples
Shall weigh your God and you.

Take up the White Man's burden!
Have done with childish days—
The lightly proffered laurel,
The easy ungrudged praise:
Come now to search your manhood
Through all the thankless years,
Cold, edged with dear-bought wisdom,
The judgment of your peers."

If we have virtue enough, if we have sufficient greatness of soul to rise to the majesty of this occasion, in all the years to come we shall look back upon the present epoch as the Easter-time of our national life.

X

The Soft March

I shall go softly all my years.—*Isaiah xxxviii, 15.*

So SAID an old king, who had already gathered many of the ripe fruits of life. Death had stared him in the face, but he felt that his work was not yet done. He longed to see the deliverance of his nation from the Assyrians. He felt that he could not die in peace until he was permitted to finish, under God's direction, the deliverance from the king of Assyria. He turned to God in prayer, and his prayer was answered with the promise that fifteen years should be added to his life. When I am introduced to King Hezekiah in heaven, I intend to ask him whether he enjoyed that fifteen years, knowing that that was all the life there was left for him on earth, as much as if the time had been left uncertain as it is with the rest of us.

Our text is a part of Hezekiah's comment on God's dealings with him, and is an expression of his own purpose as to the rest of his life. By walking softly through the years I understand him to mean that he will walk reverently and prudently, carefully doing that which is right, that which will be pleasing in the sight of God.

Surely this resolution is one which it would be as proper for young people to make as for the old, and it is as appropriate for us as for this ancient king.

There could be no wiser forecast for any young life here than this determination to go reverently and softly before the Lord in all the years that are to come. Ethelbert Marfield took this resolution, and elaborates it in a little poem which may have its lesson for us:

“‘I shall go softly all my years:’
Not as the prophet bathed in tears
And in deep bitterness of soul;
For God hath healed my heavy dole,
Hath stilled my pain and dried my tears,
And given faith for foolish fears.

‘I shall go softly,’ since I’ve found
The mighty Arm that girds me round
Is gentle, as ’t is sure and strong;
‘I shall go softly,’ through the throng,
And with compulsion calm and sweet
Lead sinners to the Savior’s feet.

How sternly passed those patient feet
Along Capernaum’s marble street!
How softly and how tenderly
Their echoes from Gethsemane
Steal down the ages, rich to bless
All time with deathless happiness!

Into my heart those echoes steal
Until I can not choose but kneel—
Not weak and worn, with vigor spent,
But joyous and in glad content—
And kneeling pray to Him who hears
To lead me softly all my years.”

King Hezekiah gives us three good reasons for walking with reverence, softly before the Lord. The first is the brevity of life. He says, “Mine age is

departed, and is removed from me as a shepherd's tent." What a graphic and beautiful illustration of the frailty of our physical lives! Nothing is more suggestive of constant change than a shepherd's tent. It is not even as stationary as the camp of a company of pleasure-seekers in the mountains for a summer; for they may stay as long as the weather is good, or while it gives them happiness; but the shepherd can only stay while the grass lasts for his flock. He must follow his sheep, and lead them to new pastures where they may be fed, and so his shepherd's tent is scarcely more than a day or two in the same place, and is ever moving on and on. So our human lives may well be compared to a shepherd's tent. They are transitory and uncertain. Even though our life stretches through threescore years and ten, or through unusual strength to fourscore years, the psalmist declares that in such a case it is like a tale that is told, and is soon cut off and we fly away. How reverently we should live, and how carefully we should use our time! Strange that people who have so little time in this world, and that as uncertain as a shepherd's tent, should deal with it so wastefully!

Barthe, the French dramatic author, was said to be so completely wrapped up in the consciousness of his own importance as to be often strangely insensible of the wants and woes of others. Calling once upon a friend whose opinion he wished to have regarding his new comedy, he found him dying, but, notwithstanding, proposed to read the play.

"Consider," said the man, "I have not more than an hour to live."

"Aye," replied Barthe, "but I assure you that this will occupy only half that time."

Horrible as that seems, it is not more strange and unwise than for us to be giving up precious hours and days of priceless time to idleness, or to interests that have no real value to ourselves or to any one else.

A second reason which King Hezekiah gives for his carefulness of conduct is the fact that he has discovered that he is like a weaver in the formation of his life, and that common days and their deeds are threads that are woven into the cloth of life. He says, "I have cut off like a weaver my life." Life seemed to him like a man working at a loom, where threads of various colors were passing through his hands, and the swift shuttles were flying to and fro, weaving the deeds of every day into the cloth of character, which after awhile is to be cut off from the loom as a weaver cuts off his piece of cloth, when the bolt is finished, and sends it out for inspection. Hezekiah's sickness and God's command to him, "Set thine house in order: for thou shalt die and not live," had given him a new sense of the fact that his life was not something that belonged entirely to him. It was not simply a personal and private matter as to how he lived and conducted himself. It was a matter of great interest to other people and to God, and was forming a record which was to be held up for inspection, and must bear finally the judgment of God.

This is a matter which is certainly as interesting and important to us as it was to the old king. We, too, are each of us weaving away day by day at the loom of life. Lucy Larcom has a song of a girl weav-

ing at the loom in one of the factories on the Merrimac River, about whom she says:

"All day she stands before her loom ;
The flying shuttles come and go :
By grassy fields and trees in bloom,
She sees the winding river flow :
And fancy's shuttle flieth wide,
And faster than the waters glide."

And as she weaves, the poet interprets to us her song:

"I weave, and weave, the livelong day ;
The woof is strong, the warp is good :
I weave, to be my mother's stay ;
I weave, to win my daily food :
But ever as I weave,' saith she,
'The world of women haunteth me.

The river glides along, one thread
In nature's mesh, so beautiful !
The stars are woven in ; the red
Of sunrise ; and the rain-cloud dull.
Each seems a separate wonder wrought ;
Each blends with some more wondrous thought.'

So, at the loom of life, we weave
Our separate shreds, that varying fall,
Some stained, some fair ; and, passing, leave
To God the gathering up of all,
In that full pattern wherein man
Works blindly out the eternal plan.

In his vast work, for good or ill,
The undone and the done he blends :
With whatsoever woof we fill,
To our weak hands his might he lends,
And gives the thread beneath his eye
The texture of eternity."

There could be no more solemn and searching question for me to ask you than to inquire what you are weaving in the loom of life, day by day. How many threads are woven into your life-piece of cloth that you would gladly cut out now if you could? But we have no power to go back and do that. How careful, then, we should be to use to the best advantage the materials given us to-day, that they may bear inspection!

First of all, we must bear the inspection of our fellows. People are helped or harmed every day by looking on the life-cloth which we are weaving. When the graces of the Christian spirit are woven into a human life, you have an evidence of the divine power of Christianity which no one is able to gainsay. That is a very striking appeal which Peter makes, in his first epistle, to the wives of heathen husbands. He earnestly exhorts these women to cultivate humility and trustful devotion, and all the gentle and charming qualities of a Christian life, so that their husbands may be won to believe in Christ through their behavior.

In that day woman was low and vulgar. She was ignorant, for she had had no chance for education. Among heathen people she was man's plaything or beast of burden, and one of the first things that amazed the heathen world, on the introduction of Christianity, was the transfiguration of womanhood. Libanius, who was a celebrated orator and author, of the city of Antioch, when he became acquainted with the families of Basil and Chrysostom, exclaimed in astonishment, "What women these Christians have!"

Dr. Jesse Bowman Young paints the picture of a meeting of the early believers in Rome, listening to the testimonies of the converts. Finally one man gets up and says: "I was a gladiator, fond of the brutal sports and games of the arena. Before my conversion I never heard an apostle preach, or attended any service held by the Christians. I was brought up to worship the heathen gods, Jupiter, Mars, and Venus. I was made to see how wicked I was by the godly conduct of my wife. She was modest, gentle, forbearing, devout, and true—a woman very different from the pagan women about her. She had patience with me in my coarseness and cruelty, and once in awhile told me of the crucified One. I scoffed at her, and ridiculed her faith, and mocked her prayers. She never wavered, and by and by I said: 'My wife has found, somewhere, a well-spring of peace and joy that I know nothing about. She has mastered the secret of patience and courage and love. I wonder if there is an Almighty Savior and a great salvation, such as she now and then talks about. I wonder if this Christ that she worships can do anything for such a rough and brutal sinner as I have been.' And, in due time, by her prayers and example of her gentle behavior, I was converted. I am in the kingdom of God, not because an apostle sought and found me, but because I had a loving, praying, devoted, and believing wife."

And thus it was that Christianity attracted that rough and brutal pagan world; and we can attract this modern world of ours if every man and woman of us who profess the name of Christ will walk softly and reverently before God, so that the robe of life

which falls from our loom shall charm the world which is constantly inspecting it.

But our weaving must not only bear the inspection of our fellow-man; we must hold it up at last to be inspected of God. How careful, then, we ought to be as to what goes into it! But some one says: "It is too late to give me such a caution. The cloth which I have been weaving is already spoiled by my sins, and I have no power to wash out the unsightly spots which might be passed over by my fellow-men, but which the clear eye of God will discern at a glance." If any one of you honestly feels like that, I have God's message for you, and it is full of hope: "Wash you, make you clean; put away the evil of your doings from before mine eyes; cease to do evil; learn to do well; seek judgment, relieve the oppressed, judge the fatherless, plead for the widow. Come now, and let us reason together, saith the Lord: though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool."

This brings us to still another reason which King Hezekiah gives for walking softly through the years that remained to him. He felt called upon to do this out of gratitude to God for his salvation. He had been frightened at his own sin, and in his fear he says: "I reckoned till morning, that, as a lion, so will he break all my bones: from day even to night wilt thou make an end of me. Like a crane or a swallow, so did I chatter: I did mourn as a dove; mine eyes fail with looking upward: O Lord, I am oppressed; undertake for me." And when he began to pray for God to undertake for him, hope began to dawn. He found

that, instead of being a lion to break his bones, God was full of infinite tenderness, and was ready to save him. The Lord not only cast his sins behind his back, but in that new sense of forgiveness he filled the king's heart with melody. "Therefore," he says, "we will sing my songs to the stringed instruments all the days of our life in the house of the Lord." I like that little touch, "my songs." The Lord will give every one of us a song of our own if we surrender ourselves completely to do his service.

There is one inspiring thing about the Bible that alone is enough to give it the right of way in this world of disappointment and tears—it is full of songs of hope and inspiration. Sorrow may endure for a night, but joy cometh with the morning. God has set the world to that key. There ought to be no hopeless man or woman among us this day. The good God loves us. Jesus died to redeem us. If we repent of our sins, forgiveness may come this very hour, and to-morrow shine brighter than any day in all the past. God is stronger than the devil, heaven is waiting for us, and we have no right to hold any fellowship with discouragement and despair. Rather let us take heart out of our Bible and its lessons, and go home singing, despite all disappointments, the song of Gerald Massey:

"High hopes that burned like stars sublime,
Go down i' the heavens of freedom,
And true hearts perish in the time
We bitterliest need 'em!
But never sit we down and say
There's nothing left but sorrow;
We walk the wilderness to-day,
The promised land to-morrow.

The Lord's Arrows

Our birds of song are silent now,
There are no flowers blooming;
Yet life is in the frozen bough,
And freedom's spring is coming;
And freedom's tide comes up alway,
Though we may strand in sorrow;
And our good bark aground to-day,
Shall float again to-morrow.

Through all the long dark night of years,
The people's cry ascendeth,
And earth is wet with blood and tears;
But our weak sufferance endeth;
The few shall not forever sway,
The many moil in sorrow;
The powers of hell are strong to-day,
But Christ shall rise to-morrow.

Though hearts brood o'er the past, our eyes
With smiling futures glisten!
For, lo! our day bursts up the skies;
Lean out your souls and listen!
The world rolls freedom's radiant way,
And ripens with her sorrow;
Keep heart! Who bear the cross to-day
Shall wear the crown to-morrow.

O youth! flame-earnest, still aspire,
With energies immortal!
To many a heaven of desire,
Our yearning opes a portal!
And though age wearies by the way,
And hearts break in the furrow,
We'll sow the golden grain to-day,
The harvest comes to-morrow."

XI

The Sternness of Love

Whose fan is in his hand.—*Luke iii, 17.*

THE hand is the hand of Jesus, and the fan is not the fan of luxury, but the fan of separation. It is at first glance a very strange description of Jesus. It was in the days of John the Baptist's great popularity. Multitudes had thronged out from the cities into the wilderness to hear the rude but magnetic and fascinating prophet. John had a rugged message, and was himself a very unconventional character; but there was about him such a breeziness of sincerity that even the most aristocratic and exclusive Pharisees found themselves charmed by the bold preacher. John's fame grew to such an extent that he was compelled to hedge against it. The people began to think that he was the Messiah instead of what he knew himself to be, only the herald of Jesus Christ. It was not in John's nature to allow such an idea to gather strength, that he himself might enjoy the temporary applause through the misunderstanding of the people. A little man or a false man might have done that; but John was neither little nor false. Humanity has never seen a more rugged, more honest, or more thoroughly genuine character than John the Baptist. Jesus himself said that he was as great a man as ever lived, and Christ is the supreme judge of what makes manhood.

John at once rebuked this rising rumor by declaring the relation of his own mission to the coming of the Messiah. From the Gospel of Luke we learn that "as the people were in expectation, and all men mused in their hearts of John, whether he were the Christ, or not, John answered, saying unto them all, I indeed baptize you with water; but one mightier than I cometh, the latchet of whose shoes I am not worthy to unloose: He shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost and with fire: whose fan is in his hand, and he will thoroughly purge his floor, and will gather the wheat into his garner; but the chaff he will burn with fire unquenchable."

I repeat that this seems a strange description of Jesus. John has the reputation of being a stern prophet, and he preached the stern and heart-searching gospel of repentance; but in his description of Jesus he certainly indicates that He is to be still more thorough and uncompromising for righteousness than himself. Look at the picture, "Whose fan is in his hand, and he will thoroughly purge his floor, and will gather the wheat into his garner; but the chaff he will burn with fire unquenchable." Where will you find a sentence with a larger number of vital words that go clear to the marrow of living, than in that sentence describing Christ? That word, "fan," used in portraying a farmer cleansing his wheat of all impurities, is a very thoroughgoing kind of word. Then there is the word "purge." If you will take the words "sweep," and "mop," and "scrub," and "scour," and boil them all down into a jelly, the result will be that word "purge." The word "wheat" indicates the per-

fectly cleansed and purified grain, and the word "chaff," used in contrast with it, means all that is not valuable, that which is fit only for destruction. And the words "burn" and "fire" are not easy-going words. Fire goes to the heart of things; nothing but the most genuine work will stand when the building is on fire. The so-called fire-proof vault or safe can only prove its genuineness by coming out of the flames with its treasures unscorched when the building goes down into ashes. And if to "fire" you add that other word, "unquenchable," you have an intensity of expression that can not be surpassed.

But you say, Why should John have presented Jesus Christ as more stern and uncompromising even than himself, when we know that he was the most loving and tender-hearted of all the characters that have ever appeared in the pages of history? My answer is, that John's picture is true. Christ was more stern and heart-searching even than John, because he was more loving than John.

This, then, is our theme, that there is nothing so stern, so relentless, so absolutely uncompromising, as a perfect love. And it is because Jesus loves us more than anybody else, that he demands of us a purity of character and a nobility of purpose more splendid than that demanded by any other leader that has appeared among men. This is not far-fetched or exaggerated. The principle is capable of universal application. It is ever the people who love you most who are most sensitive to any spot on your good name, and who feel the hurt most keenly, if any noisome fly is discovered in the fragrant ointment of your character. No easy-

going neighbor or indifferent stranger ever hates the sin which is apparent in a young man's life with half such intensity as does the mother who would die, if need be, for her son. A great many parents are easy and indulgent with their children, and allow them to become spoiled and scarred by wicked habits, not because, as they say—and no doubt fondly imagine—they love them too much to punish them when they do wrong, and through firm discipline hold them to the formation of good habits; but really because they do not love them enough. True love never permits the beloved one to be fatally injured through failure to perform a painful duty toward him. A recent German writer, Mr. Theodore Seelman, commenting on the habits of the Spanish people, comes to the conclusion that the decline of the Spanish nation and the general deterioration of character come very largely from an easy-going and indulgent treatment of children by Spanish parents. He says the Spanish mother spares the rod, and indulges her children to her heart's content, with the result that Spain has become a nation of spoiled children. How infinitely better was the old Grecian mother's treatment of her sons and daughters, that demanded when she gave her boy his shield to go to the battle, that he should either come back with it with honor, or back upon it dead, borne by his comrades!

Only this week I have been told the story of a mother, an intelligent, noble woman, whose son was born with a crooked foot. The doctor and her husband were consulting in whispers at the foot of the bed, where she lay weak and ill. She asked them what

it was, immediately perceiving through her mother instinct that there was something wrong with her child. They tried to allay her suspicions, and told her it was nothing. But she would not be satisfied, and said, "Bring the child to me, and show me what is the matter!"

There was such a tone of earnestness and such a declaration of a mother's right in her child, that the doctor saw that it would not do in her weakened condition to be other than frank with her. So he brought the babe, and showed her the little crooked, turned foot.

"How can this be made right?" said the mother.

"Well," said the doctor, "a surgeon should be called, and the foot turned to its proper position with instruments. But it will cause the child a good deal of pain. Do you think you are strong enough to witness it?"

"Send for the surgeon at once," said the mother. "My son must not wear a crooked limb through life because it makes his mother nervous to hear him cry."

The surgeon came with his instruments. The foot was put into some sort of a vise, and the screw was turned on. The child screamed, and the mother watched the operation with intense earnestness.

When the doctor was willing to say that the work was done, she made him bring the child and show her, and she held the little feet together and said: "It is not quite enough yet, doctor; turn the screw once more. I want my son to grow up with perfect feet and limbs, and it is his mother's duty to be true to him in his weakness, and see that it is done right."

Is there any question in your mind as to which mother loved her child the more—the mother I have described, or one on a neighboring block who let her child grow up with a crooked limb and hobble through life on crutches, handicapped from the day of his birth to the day of his death, because she could not bear to have him suffer or cause him pain? We know that the truest love was in the heart of the mother who was willing, not only to suffer herself, but to have her child suffer, that he might come to his manhood full and strong. The babe in the hands of the surgeon did not suffer one-hundredth part as much as the mother who watched the operation. If her throbbing, beating heart had been in the jaws of the vise, instead of that delicate little ankle, it could not have hurt her worse; but her great love nerved her to endure all this, that she might be true to her son's interests for a lifetime.

Can you not see in this the philosophy of all the painful discipline through which Christ heals the withered hands and straightens the crooked limbs of your spiritual nature and mine? It is because he loves us so infinitely, and sees in us such divine possibilities, that he makes us suffer for awhile, that through the furnace of discipline we may be purified and made whole for the eternal life.

A boy was taken on in a store for two weeks' trial. If he suited he was to be kept permanently, and if at the end of the time they thought he would not do, he would be dropped without any further ceremony. One night he came home and said to his mother: "I guess I've got a staying job."

"Why."

"Well, the proprietor has been very strict with me to-day, and he said some straight things about what I've got to do to succeed."

It turned out as the boy thought. He had a "staying" job, and his employer had had that straight talk with him to prepare him for his work. The boy had shrewdly reasoned that if the employer had not intended to keep him, he would not have taken the trouble to talk with him so severely and earnestly. What a flood of light that boy's experience throws on the words of Paul: "Whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth."

The supreme love of Christ for us is shown in the thorough way in which he goes, not only into our deeds, but far deeper—into the purpose of our lives. Mr. Hamilton W. Mabie, one of the most spiritual of modern moral philosophers, strongly sets forth the truth that workers of all kinds are divided into classes by differences of skill and by differences of aim. The artist not only handles his materials in a different way from that which the artisan employs; but he uses them for a different end, and in a different spirit. The peculiarity of the artist is his supreme concern with the quality of his work, and his subordinate interest in the returns of reputation or money which the work brings him. No wise man can be indifferent to recognition and to material rewards, because there is a vital relation between honest work and adequate wages of all kinds; a relation as clearly existing in the case of Michael Angelo or William Shakespeare as in the case of the man who digs potatoes or sets up telephone

poles. But when the real artist plans his work, and while he is putting his life into it day by day, the possible rewards which await him are overshadowed by the supreme necessity of making the work itself sound, true, adequate, and noble. A man is at his best only when he pours out his vital energy at full tide, in perfect self-abandonment, without thought or care for anything save the complete expression of himself. Mr. Mabie, therefore, reasons that the man who would reach the highest level of activity in any work must be spiritual and not material in his aim. To such a man the rewards of work—such as money, influence, position, fame—will be the incidents, not the ends, of his toil. He has a right to look for them and count upon them; but if he be a true workman they will never be his inspirations, nor can they ever be his highest rewards. The man in public life who aims to secure a certain official position as the ultimate goal of his ambition may be a successful politician, but can never be a statesman; for a statesman is supremely concerned with the interests of the State, and only subordinately with his own interests. Such a man may definitely seek a Presidency or a Premiership; but he will seek it, not for that which it will give him in the way of reward, but for that which it will give him in the way of opportunity. A genuine man seeks a great place, not that he may be seen of men, but that he may speak to, influence, and lead men.

Does anybody ask, "What has that to do with our theme?" My answer is, that it has everything to do with it. The law, which does not love us, deals only with the outside of our lives. It does not care for what

we are, but only for what we do; it does not care for what we hope, or love, or fear, or struggle to attain in our inmost heart; it cares only for our outward conduct. Yet we all know that purpose is more than performance.

It has been aptly said that the results of the two exploits of Lieutenant Hobson of sinking the *Merrimac* and raising the *Maria Teresa* afford an illustration of the failure of a well-conceived and skillfully-conducted enterprise to achieve its end. The *Merrimac* never closed the harbor of Santiago, and interposed only a trivial obstacle to the movements of the Spanish fleet. The *Maria Teresa*, which Hobson had successfully raised, was wrecked on its way to a Northern port. But are these exploits of Hobson valueless because, so far as practical results are concerned, they are failures? Are we to countermand the praise that has been lavished on him, because he did not close the harbor and the Spanish warship was not added to our fleet? By no means. The failures were beyond his control. The work that was in his control he did valiantly and skillfully. We are not responsible for results, and results afford the most superficial and untrustworthy standards for appraising personal values. The most astounding results have been achieved by sheer "luck." But fidelity to tasks, courage, self-sacrifice, skill, have a permanent value independent of the combination of events which may make them fail of their end. We do not praise Hobson the less because both of his exploits were absolute failures.

It is peculiarly the characteristic of love that it cares for the purpose. Love is more anxious about the

motive than about the performance. That is so always. A woman cares more for a single violet with the loving purpose and heart full of affection behind it, than for the grandest bouquet of roses ever cut, sent her out of formal politeness. Love always goes behind the performance to search for the motive before rendering judgment. It takes a mother's love to judge a little child. The hand of the child may be awkward, the foot stumbling, the temperament shy and untrained; but what cares the mother for the awkward hand, or the stumbling foot, or the bashful lack of grace, if behind it the motive of the child is true and faithful? On the other hand, no amount of skill or politeness can make up to the mother's heart for the lack of loving purpose on the part of the child. Christ's love is like that, except that his love is in full measure and goes down to the marrow of every purpose of our lives. He can not compromise with our sins or meannesses. His love is too thorough-going and real for that. But he can forgive our blunders, and he will not turn against us for awkwardness. If there be any wheat of honest purpose in us, he will find it; but the chaff of sham, and humbug, and insincerity will fly before his fan, and burn in unquenchable fire.

I would to God I had the power to preach, as it ought to be preached, to my own heart as well as to yours, the loathing and contempt, the abhorrence, that must be in the heart of Christ toward an insincere and unreal life. We are all so constantly praying for God's help, his assistance in a Christian life, and yet when it comes in the way of discipline and restraint we

shrink from it in terror. That is because our prayer is not really honest. We sing in the hymn,—

“Nearer, my God, to thee,
Nearer to thee;
E'en though it be a cross
That raiseth me;
Still all my song shall be,
Nearer, my God, to thee,
Nearer to thee!”

But when God takes us at our word, and we come in sight of the cross, we shrink back in dismay.

One day a little son of a well-known minister was playing with some boys who had a cart, and they wanted a dog to draw it.

“Papa says we must pray for what we want,” said the minister’s son, and he knelt down and said, “O Lord, send us a dog to draw our cart!”

Sure enough, in a little while a big, strong dog came trotting down the street; but he was so big and fierce-looking that he frightened them, and they began to cry. A second time the boy knelt; but this time he prayed, “O Lord, we do n’t want a bulldog!”

Is not that a very true illustration of our own attitude many times? We want somebody to draw our cart, but we want to dictate as to how it shall be done, and we are not particular about the load the cart hauls. We can only have Divine assistance by living with Divine purposes, and surrendering ourselves with complete devotion to the Divine will. Let us not shrink from the cross, let us not shrink from the honesty that Jesus demands of us, for in that wholesomeness of character is the only perfect safety.

Right seems often unguarded and helpless, but it is the only secure thing in God's universe. Paul Laurence Dunbar utters a great truth in his little song of "Right's Security:"

"What if the wind, do howl without,
And turn the creaking weather-vane?
What if the arrows of the rain
Do beat against the window-pane?
Art thou not armored strong and fast
Against the sallies of the blast?
Art thou not sheltered safe and well
Against the flood's insistent swell?

What boots it that thou stand'st alone,
And laughest in the battle's face
When all the weak have fled the place,
And let their feet and fears keep pace?
Thou wavest still thine ensign high,
And shoutest thy loud battle-cry;
Higher than e'er the tempest roared,
It cleaves the silence like a sword.

Right arms and armors to that man
Who will not compromise with wrong;
Though single he must front the throng,
And wage the battle hard and long;
Minorities, since time began,
Have shown the better side of man,
And often in the lists of time
One man has made a cause sublime."

XII

A Healthy Countenance; or, the Secret of Beauty

I shall yet praise Him, who is the health of my countenance and my God.—*Psalm xlii, 11.*

THE countenance is the dial-plate of the soul, and marks the time of day in happiness and character. The first ravages that sin made in the world revealed themselves in the countenance. When Cain found that his selfish, greedy life was not pleasing to God, and noticed that the faithful and gentle life of Abel won the Divine approbation, he was very angry and his countenance fell. This change in countenance was so marked that the Lord said to him, "Why is thy countenance fallen?"

It is no small charge to make against sin that it is responsible for all the ugliness in the world; but it is undoubtedly true. God loves beautiful things, and we are sure that he never created man to be ugly and repulsive. Men's faces are marred and seamed by the influences of sin, so that many who have not sinned themselves bear the ugly burden which is their inheritance from a sinful past. The passions and lusts and appetites and emotions play upon the countenance, casting there the shadow of the soul within, as the clouds build pictures in the sky, or throw their shadows on the sea. When Laban had become envious of Jacob's success and was scheming in his mind for

some way to do him harm, Jacob took alarm and took steps for his safety; when the change of Laban's purpose was revealed in his countenance, Jacob said to Rachel and Leah, "I see your father's countenance, that it is not toward me as before." When Moses sought to warn the Hebrews against the nation that would come against them and bring them to sorrow if they should ever turn away from God and his worship, he described the people, after telling them of all the wickedness and cruelty they would do, as "a nation of fierce countenance."

Sorrow writes very swiftly its message on the countenance. When Nehemiah was overwhelmed with sorrow at the knowledge of the desolation that had come to Jerusalem, his native city, all the pleasures of the palace of Shushan could not soothe his aching heart. He was the king's cup-bearer, and had been a very cheerful and happy-faced young man, and when he went in to the king with his glass of wine, the change was so marked in his face that the king said unto him, "Why is thy countenance sad, seeing thou art not sick? This is nothing else but sorrow of heart." Nehemiah replied, "Why should not my countenance be sad, when the city, the place of my fathers' sepulchres, lieth waste, and the gates thereof are consumed with fire?" But the king put joy into that countenance when he sent him away with help to rebuild again the city of his love.

It is one of the chief characteristics of Christianity that it works a marvelous change in the human countenance. One of the first things noted in a heathen land is the sad and hopeless faces of the people. It

was indicative of the whole work of Christianity when the heavenly host sang at the birth of Jesus, in their anthem to the shepherds, "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men." The gospel of Christ has been to the world, and is yet, above all else, "good tidings of great joy." There is nothing more noticeable than the change of countenance in a sinner who has given his heart to God and received the joy and assurance of salvation. The bitterness of conviction of sin and of remorse for sin is a good background for the joy of forgiveness which illumines the face of one who is made "a new creature in Christ Jesus." In his beautiful parable called "Transformation," Hawthorne says that men, until they realize their sin, are morally little more than animals; but from hearts plowed by contrition spring flowers fairer than ever grew in the hard soil of unbroken self-content. There blooms in them the perception of a better form of character than we have yet attained. Out of this mellowed soil spring sympathy and charity for other erring mortals, and, sweetest blossom of all, gratitude toward the gracious Source of all good. This transformation of soul reveals itself in the countenance in a way that the most casual observer may detect though he may not understand.

There is a myth concerning an old painter that, by a happy chance, he compounded one day a certain mordant, which, colorless itself, possessed the power of heightening every color with which it was mixed. By the help of his discovery, from being a commonplace artist he rose to the position of a noted master. His works were renowned for the marvelous brilliancy

of their tints. On his canvas was produced the perfect hue of the wavering emerald of the forest, the silver gleam of the moonlight on the river, the swimming lights of the golden sunset, and the infinite azure of the sky. The charm of the picture was given by the colorless nurse of color, which, by its strange alchemy, transfigured the crudeness and coarseness of the common tint. This is what the Divine love, falling in forgiveness and conscious blessing on a human heart, does for the character. The radiance of a face borne by a noble soul, thus consecrated to God and his service and glorified by his conscious presence, is due to this divine alchemy of love.

This transfiguration is possible to every human being. Souls that have been most completely surrendered to the light of the Divine countenance have had faces of marvelous brightness and blessing. There were times when Moses so gave himself up to communion with God that the people were not able to look on his face until it was veiled, so brightly did it reflect the beauty and glory of the Divine countenance. When Stephen was being condemned by perjured witnesses, the vindictive and cruel persecutors who surrounded him at his trial were compelled to take notice that his face shone like the face of an angel. Although Christ's face was seamed with sorrow by his sympathy in bearing the burden of the earth's woes at his crucifixion, when he rose from the dead the splendor of his countenance was like lightning, and the veteran Roman soldiers fell like dead men, smitten to blindness by the light of his face. The human

face has not lost its power to be the channel of that Divine communication. A lady who saw Frances Willard when she was a girl in college says that her attention was immediately arrested by the wonderful light which glowed in her face, and in later years thousands were often held in awe by that holy halo which seemed to fall upon her from the Christ she loved. Who of us has not known such faces, many of them in the most quiet walks of life, humble souls who had no thought that they were specially good, and whose consciousness of their own limitations was never absent from them, and yet whose countenances bore testimony of that spiritual health which never comes to any save those who walk in the light of the countenance of God. Indeed, it is this unconscious spiritual shining which is most healthy and most valuable.

Dr. Andrew Bonar was talking with Mr. Moody at Northfield one day. Along came a band of students, who shouted out: "We've been having an all-night prayer-meeting. Can't you see our faces shine?"

Dr. Bonar turned to them, and said, with a quiet smile and shake of the head, "Moses wist not that his face shone."

The people who are always ready in testimony-meetings and elsewhere to call attention to their own holiness take away the charm and beauty of a holy life, which ought to show itself by spirit and deed and by a self-surrender so complete that others behold the beauty of which the soul itself is unconscious.

There is no human measurement fine enough to

tell adequately the influence of such transfigured countenances in winning others to a Christian life. A certain Dr. Marsh was very gentle and loving and kind and good. As he grew old, his face became more and more beautiful. It seemed as if his religion was written in every line of his face. One day some friends went out to visit him in his parsonage. They took with them a heathen prince from India, who had come to London on some business with the government. When this man saw good old Dr. Marsh, he was very much surprised by the appearance of his face. He thought it was the most beautiful face that he had ever seen; it seemed to him almost like the face of an angel. When he was going back to London in the evening, the heathen prince said to his friends, "That good minister has such a beautiful face that I must learn about his religion and worship his God." Surely no sacrifice is too great whereby one may win a face like that!

A teacher in a Sunday-school in a mission in the West End of Boston had a boy in her class who seemed to be proof against every good influence. It was a wonder that she secured his attendance for any length of time; but by her tact and kindness she held her other pupils, and he came, apparently for company's sake and for the fun and mischief he could stir up among the other scholars. He gave no sign that her teachings had touched his moral nature, or, in fact, that he had any moral nature. He grew apparently more unprincipled as he grew older, until all she had done for him seemed wasted pains; but she continued to treat him kindly, and never forgot him

in her prayers. One day she heard of his arrest for complicity in a burglary. She did what she could to secure him legal counsel in his trial, and through the two years of imprisonment that followed she visited him regularly. He never gave any indication of penitence. His sullen, defiant temper greatly discouraged her, but her faith and love were invincible. He disappeared after his release. All who knew him supposed that he was dead or lost under a feigned name somewhere in the criminal herd of some great city. Nearly thirty years passed. The lady went to California. In the meantime she had married. Her children were grown, and she, with her husband, was visiting friends in the Pacific States. In one city where she stopped, a question of political reform was agitating the people, pending a change in the municipal government. Her host and hostess were to entertain one of the candidates for mayor. "He is our man," they said, "and we hope to elect him; for he is an earnest Christian, and stands for high principle in public and in private life."

The gentleman came and was about to be introduced to the visitor, when, to her surprise, he sprang forward, with face gleaming with earnestness and delight, and spoke her name. She could not recognize him in the splendid, bearded man before her; but he was her bad boy of the Boston West End Sunday-school. "Under God," said the man, earnestly, "I owe everything I have to-day of true manhood to you and to the sympathetic, kindly face you brought to see me during those dark days of my prison life. The memory of the Christian sympathy in your face

finally won me to believe that it was possible for me to be a good man."

This healthy countenance can only be had through fellowship with God. Man's countenance becomes healthy by holding communion with his Maker. David begins his psalm by praising the countenance of God, but before he concludes it he has taken courage concerning the health of his own countenance. In the Book of Proverbs there is a declaration that as "iron sharpeneth iron, so a man sharpeneth the countenance of his friend." The friendship of God brings our countenances to be like his. In another place David says, "As for me, I will behold thy face in righteousness; I shall be satisfied when I awake with thy likeness."

The Christian has the assurance that he shall become at last like the Christ whom he loves. The English Bishop of Marlborough has recently told the story of a young officer who was the very pride and glory of his regiment, the strongest, ablest, most courageous, and the most deeply and thoroughly Christian, who, through a long, weary campaign, sacrificed himself in his love for the men of his regiment. He lay dying, mortally wounded, on the battle-field, where he had led his men with great bravery. Around him the men of his own company were sitting and kneeling in different postures, all saying one to another, with sadness, "We shall never see his like again." And then one told some little story of his bravery in the trenches, and another of a kindness to a poor fellow who had fallen into sin; and all were

saying, "We shall never see his like again." Finally he overheard them, and with a last effort of love toward those whom he had loved and served so well, he turned, and said: "Comrades, if I have been at all what you say I have been to you and to others, it is because I tried to be like another—not like myself, but like another. Let me tell you my story, lads. When I was entering the army, my dear father, an officer himself, took me, the day before I enlisted, into his library. He spoke to me of all the dangers that lay before me, and then said, 'My son, you will find one thing that will help you more than anything else: have an ideal, and live up to it every day.' And then he opened the prophecy of Isaiah, and turned to these words, 'The King in his beauty, in the land that is very far off.' Day by day that has been my ideal; day by day that is what I have tried to be, dear comrades, like 'the King in his beauty, in the land that is afar off.' You may do the same." And then, in his last weakness, he turned from them to commune with the King in his beauty, and he was heard to murmur, "A little more trustful, a little more patient, a little more like the King—" he did not finish, for his spirit had access to the King in his beauty, who was no longer, to him, in the land that is afar off.

As we commune with him who is Lord over all, who is Light and Love, and in whom is no darkness at all, our horizon lifts, and we are made brother to all men of every name and race whose faces, like flowers, turn upward, seeking the Sun. Then we are able to appreciate the song-prayer of Dr. Matheson,

the blind Scotch preacher-poet, whose spiritual insight more than repays for lack of physical vision:

“Gather us in, thou Love that fillest all,
 Gather our rival faiths within Thy fold;
 Rend each man's temple's veil and bid it fall,
 That we may know that Thou hast been of old;
 Gather us in!

Gather us in! We worship only Thee,
 In varied names we stretch a common hand;
 In diverse forms a common soul we see;
 In many ships we seek one spirit-land;
 Gather us in!

Each sees one color of Thy rainbow-light,
 Each looks upon one tint and calls it heaven;
 Thou art the fullness of our partial sight;
 We are not perfect till we find the seven;
 Gather us in!

Thine is the mystic life great India craves,
 Thine is the Parsee's sin-destroying beam;
 Thine is the Buddhist's rest from tossing waves,
 Thine is the empire of vast China's dream;
 Gather us in!

Thine is the Roman's strength without his pride,
 Thine is the Greek's glad world without its graves;
 Thine is Judea's law with love beside,
 The truth that censures and the grace that saves;
 Gather us in!

Some seek a Father in the heavens above,
 Some ask a human image to adore;
 Some crave a spirit vast as life and love:
 Within Thy mansions we have all and more;
 Gather us in!”

XIII

Drinking from Christ's Cup

Ye shall indeed drink of the cup that I drink of.

—*Mark x, 39.*

TWO YOUNG men had come to Christ, full of the ambition of youth, desirous of promotion. They wanted high honor in the kingdom which they thought Christ would set up, and they no doubt thought it would be here on the earth. One wanted to sit on his right hand, and the other on his left. Christ does not sternly or severely rebuke them, but, taking them at their word, in substance says, "Can you pay the price?" He reveals to them that to sit next to him and to enjoy his fellowship means to share his fate on the way to the crown as well as after the crown is won, and that places in the spiritual kingdom are not won by favoritism, but by fitness, by character. And then, with tender solicitude, he assures them that they shall indeed share his fate. "Ye shall indeed drink of the cup that I drink of; and with the baptism that I am baptized withal, shall ye be baptized."

It is concerning this personal fellowship and communion with Christ, this sharing the fate of Jesus in time and in eternity, that I wish to engross our thought at this time. To be a Christian is to be like Christ, to share with him in all the experiences of life. We are to drink Christ's cup, not only on the day of

Transfiguration, but also in the wilderness with the wild beasts. We must share his cup of temptation. We can never fully know what temptation meant to Christ, when, famished in the wilderness, the devil put the thought into his mind that he might make bread from the stones; or what it meant when, oppressed with poverty, the Satanic allurements came to him that he might give up the path toward the cross, let men go on in their sins, and he enjoy all the kingdoms of the world and the glory of them; yet in our own measure those same temptations will come to us, and we must drink from Christ's cup. It is a comfort to feel that it is Christ's cup, that he has drained it to the very dregs, and that there is nothing in it that can poison our lives so long as we follow his example and steadfastly maintain our fidelity to God. There is no sin in temptation unless we have willfully gone into it. There is nothing for which we ought to thank God more than for the grace that has saved us from letting temptation crystallize into sin, except it be for the heart that loathes sin. W. D. Howells voices the thanksgiving of many hearts in his grateful lines:

"Lord, for the erring thought
Not into evil wrought;
Lord, for the wicked will
Betrayed and baffled still;
For the heart from itself kept—
Our thanksgiving accept."

We must drink of Christ's cup of loneliness and pain. I think the loneliness of Jesus is full of infinite

pathos. There is nothing in his life that appeals more tenderly to my own heart than those nights of his ministry, when, the people having thronged him all day long—he preaching, teaching, and healing until all strength had gone out from him—he went away alone into the mountains to get comfort and renewed courage from fellowship with God. There is much of loneliness in every human life. After all that friendship and love can do for us, there remains the fact that the individual soul must face the great problems of life and death alone. And into them no other soul may enter. The question of our individual responsibility to God brings out the loneliness of life more than any other. All growth in character, all development of soul, must in some degree be lonely and painful. Christ's life had many painful experiences, and we must drink of his cup. But surely it is sweet to know that it is Christ's cup, and full of infinite comfort to feel that if we drink it in humility and love, it will nourish in us the same beautiful and holy life that it did in him.

One of our young poets, Miss Gabrielle Stewart, makes a young girl who looks on the chastened beauty and nobility of a white-haired saint, the ripened flower of womanhood, sing:

“ If pain again
Can make a face
As sweet, complete
As thine; then trace
In mine what line
Thou wilt, O pain;
I 'll not complain.

If years and tears
Can leave such look
Sublime ; O time,
Write in my book
What tears and fears
Thou wilt for me."

How much more may we say that as we look in the face of Jesus Christ, and willingly drink of the cup that may bring us to the day when we shall see him as he is and be like him!

We must drink of Christ's cup of toil and struggle. We are to be soldiers of Jesus Christ. The disciple is not above his Lord, and there will be enemies who will sneer at us as there were those who hurled their cruel darts at our Master. Good old Isaac Watts asked in his day,—

"Is this vile world a friend to grace,
To help me on to God?"

and answered it in the next verse,—

"Sure I must fight if I would reign ;
Increase my courage, Lord."

If we are to be really the soldiers of Christ, we must be armored in the same way he was. We need to have on the whole armor of our Lord. No worldly armor of wealth or culture or good breeding will avail us. We must be strong in the Lord. Our loins must be girded about with the truth. The breastplate of righteousness must protect our hearts, while shoes made from the preparation of the gospel of peace make us sure-footed on the rocky path or the glare ice. The shield of faith alone can quench the darts

that will fly at us with devilish malignity, and the helmet of salvation must protect our minds from intellectual assault. When we are thus clothed upon, the sword of the Spirit in our strong hand will be a weapon that shall do execution.

We need all the soldierly qualities. We must be alert, wide awake, and not be caught slumbering on guard. We must discipline ourselves by every-day service so that we shall be steadfast in this holy campaign. It is for a lifetime. It is the soldier that endures to the end who receives the Divine applause, and is crowned by his Lord.

The Christian who goes into this fight with honest heart and determined purpose is sure of abundant victory. Paul in his enthusiasm says that he is more than a conqueror; that is, he does not escape by the skin of his teeth, and get through barely with his life, but comes to the end rejoicing, with many trophies of the victories he has won under the banner of the cross. The Christian who lives in this communion with Christ is a happy soldier, and has many a glad song about the camp-fires along the way.

"Thy saints in all this glorious war
Shall conquer though they die;
They see the triumph from afar,
By faith they bring it nigh."

We shall drink of Christ's cup of inspiration. The great leaders of men are those who can inspire them with their own faith and courage. We have a happy illustration of this in an incident of the Spanish war: When the American line had fought its way to the

top of the hills at El Paso and San Juan and Caney, General Joseph Wheeler issued an order that every command should dig trenches in preparation for the conflict that he knew would break out again in the morning. But the soldiers had thrown away most of their trenching tools during the fierce rifle charges, and as darkness fell upon the scene of battle, they threw themselves upon the ground and went to sleep from sheer exhaustion. An adjutant, noting this condition of affairs, rode over to General Wheeler's tent and informed the old veteran that the men were played out. Wheeler at the time was lying on his cot more dead than alive; but there was a smile upon his lips, and his never-failing good humor twinkled in his eyes when the officer said, "General, I am afraid our men can't dig the trenches."

"What men?" asked the general.

"The cavalry division," said the adjutant.

General Wheeler sat up in bed, and began pulling on his boots.

"Send me the man," he directed.

"What man?" asked the adjutant.

"The man who can't dig the trenches."

"But it is not one man, it is many men. They are just played out."

"But you can surely find one man who says he can't dig the trench. I only want one. Get him, and bring him to me."

"But there are—"

"I don't care how many there are. Go, get me one."

The adjutant had never faced such a man as Wheeler before, and he did not know just what to

make of the conversation. The little old general was as smooth and suave and courteous as could be, and the adjutant had nothing to do but ride back to the lines. In some way he managed to round up a colored trooper belonging to the Ninth Cavalry, and brought him back to the division headquarters. He stood looking sheepishly at the ground when Wheeler addressed him.

"Are you the man who says he can't dig these trenches?" asked the general.

The Negro's feet shuffled uneasily on the ground.

"I 's one of 'em, boss; but there 's a—"

The general stopped him, and walked out of his tent.

"You can go to sleep now, my man, and I 'll go and dig your trench for you. When the sun comes up to-morrow morning, the Spaniards are going to open on us; and every man who is n't protected is not only in danger of being killed, but will be unable to help us maintain our own position. The trenches have to be dug, and if you are unable to dig yours, I 'll just go and dig it for you. Where 's your pick?"

With the most business-like air in the world, Wheeler slid into his coat and turned toward the big cavalryman. The latter's eyes opened as he saw the proceedings, and they began to bulge out when the general motioned him to lead the way to his camp. For a half minute his voice stuck in his throat, and then he said: "Boss, you ain't fit to dig no trenches. If they done got to be dug, I 'll just naturally do it myself. I 'm dog— tired; but that ain't no work for you."

Wheeler stopped and looked at the man, with a

flicker of amusement in his eyes. "I know it is n't work for me to do," he said; "but I'm going to need soldiers in the morning, and I'm going to save your life if possible. Do you think, now, that you can dig the trench?"

The Negro started up the hill without a word. Then the general turned to the adjutant, with a voice as pleasant as the sun in May. "He seems to have changed his mind," he said. "Now you go find me another man who can't dig the trenches."

The adjutant bowed and rode off. He never came back. In the morning the trenches were dug.

David Livingston
The glorious achievements of Christianity have been possible because we are called to follow a leader who does not send us to dig trenches alone, but who says to us: "Come unto me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden; take my yoke upon you, and ye shall find rest unto your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light." He will share the yoke with us. He does not say that the man who is to be his disciple must deny himself and go forth alone to battle, but it is, "Follow me." He will be ever ahead of us. At every point of danger we shall see his cross at the head of the column. We shall drink the cup of his inspiration, and hardship will become joyous exercise in such holy fellowship.

We shall drink the cup of his joy. Christ's joy, he assured his disciples at the well of Samaria, was in doing the will of God, in the knowledge that he was hastening God's righteous purpose in the earth. In one of George MacDonald's books, one of the characters is Gerard, a beautiful little invalid boy. One

day, as he sat in the window, delighting himself with the sight of a lovely sunset, he exclaimed, "O mamma, how I would like to help God paint the sky!"

"My darling!" said his mother, as she clasped him to her heart, "you are helping God paint the sky; for you make the sky of my life very, very bright." Then little Gerard was glad in his heart.

It is our glorious privilege to help God paint the sky that hangs over the lives of the men and women whom we meet day by day. By smile and word and deed we are painting the sky through God's grace for our fellow-men, and if we are doing it reverently and lovingly, we drink Christ's cup of joy in saving the world.

We share Christ's friendship. He dwells in our hearts. Lovingly we commune with him from day to day. How infinitely superior is this blessed personal communion with Christ to the vague and indefinite philosophies of heathen religions! Dr. George F. Pentecost says that he once had a conversation with an educated Buddhist who was singing in his prayer-wheel, and repeating meaningless words.

"What are you praying for?" asked the Doctor.

"O, nothing."

"Whom are you praying to?"

"O, nobody!"

"And that," says Pentecost, "is Buddhism. Praying for nothing, to nobody."

But the Christian breathes out his inmost soul to the Christ who dwells in his heart. The story is told of the Empress Elizabeth of Austria, who met

such a cruel death, that some years since an English gentleman, who was the owner of a fine hunting-estate on the south coast of Spain, where he usually spent the summer months, was approached by the Austrian consul, who said that his mistress, the Empress Elizabeth, understanding that he proposed spending the season in England, greatly desired to rent his place. The Englishman said he would not rent his place to any one, but he would feel highly honored if her majesty would occupy it for the summer. When he returned with his family in the autumn, his wife received a note from the empress, saying that she would pass through Jarez, their winter home, on a certain day, and desired to breakfast with her. Her majesty expressed her indebtedness for a delightful summer, and urged that she be allowed to make some compensation for the place; but the offer was gracefully refused. At length the empress said, "Is there nothing I can do to show my appreciation of your kindness and courtesy?"

"Well," replied the Englishman, "if, on your majesty's return to Vienna, you will send me a small photograph with your autograph, I shall be pleased to possess it." Several months passed without the appearance of the promised portrait, and the English family rather unwillingly arrived at the conclusion that the illustrious lady had entirely forgotten them and her promise, when, a few weeks later, an enormous box arrived, containing a finely-framed full-length oil painting of the empress, executed by one of the first artists of Europe. That was surely done in a royal manner, and was a queenly deed;

but Christ does better than that by us. He abides as our Guest continually; he clothes our natures with his own gracious Spirit; he calls us by his own name, and makes us to drink daily the cup of peace and joy and glory which belongs to him.

We shall drink of his cup of glory forever. There is an old Norse tale which tells that just where the forest ended grew a pine-tree, taller and more beautiful than all the others in the forest. It had room there to send out its beautiful branches, and it grew straight and tall, so that one could see it from far away. At the foot of the pine-tree the grain-fields began. Here the farmer sowed flax; and almost under the shadow of the great pine-tree there came up a slender green plant. The pine was very fond of it. Often they talked together, and promised that they would always be friends.

"How foolish you are!" said the other trees to the pine. "The flax is such a weak, tiny thing. Why do you not choose a friend like yourself?" But the pine was loyal to the flax.

"You must be very silly," said the rude weeds to the flax, "to think your friendship is worth anything to the pine-tree! You are not very wise or very strong, and some day you may be sorry that you did not listen to us."

"I shall trust the pine-tree," said the flax.

Now the day came when the flax was pulled up and made into linen cloth. Men came, too, and cut down the pine-tree, and dragged it away.

"That was a fine friendship," said the weeds to the trees. "Now they will never see each other again."

But the pine-tree and the flax did not forget. In the city by the sea there lay a great ship. The pine-tree was the mainmast, and at its top there waved a flag. The mast was proud of its place, but the ship could not stir yet. Then there came a great white cloth; that was a sail. It clung to the mast, and spread itself out like a great wing. Into its soft curves the wind crept, and now the ship was eager to be off. The sail was made of the linen from the flax-plant, and the two faithful friends clasped hands gladly. Out over the dancing blue waves they went into the new life beyond.

"Who could have believed it?" said the forest-trees to the weeds, when the wind whispered it to them. But the pine-tree and the flax had believed it; for they believed each other.

Let us abide faithful in our friendship with Jesus Christ. Let us drink without murmuring from his cup of temptation and pain and struggle. If we are faithful in sharing his cup now, we shall not only share his cup of peace and inspiration here, but we shall drink of the cup of his glorious fellowship through all eternity. Day by day we shall lose our ugliness as the flax did. Broken between the burrs of discipline, humbled under the flail of trial, spun on the wheel of hardship and self-denial, woven into the cloth of character that God wills, the day shall come when all that was ugly and repulsive and earthly shall be thrown off, and we shall come in God's good time to share the fellowship of Christ's beauty and glory in that land where he shall be crowned with many crowns.

XIV

Acquaintance with God

Acquaint now thyself with Him, and be at peace : thereby good shall come unto thee.—*Job xxii, 21.*

A SOJOURN is never pleasant unless we are on good terms with our host. If you had the privilege of visiting some lordly palace, standing in the midst of beautiful grounds, where it has taken centuries of care to grow rare trees and develop beauty of landscape, where gardens of brilliant color and intoxicating perfume are on every side, its loveliness would not be sufficient to give you joy if you knew there was no welcome in the heart of the owner toward you, and that every moment of your stay was an intrusion; worse yet, if you had wronged him, had betrayed him by some act of treachery, had sinned against his name, and brought his reputation into shame and disrepute. Under such circumstances, every hour spent in those delightful grounds would be uncomfortable and full of punishment. If you were to go into the palace itself and have free course through its luxurious apartments, the result would be the same. The rare books in the library, the glorious works of art hanging on the walls, the sumptuous furnishings, the perfect combination of beauty and taste everywhere, would be powerless to give you peace if you knew that in the inner chamber, where the host lived, there was no confidence in you, and that he had a right to look

upon you with distrust as a person who was likely to receive his kindness and use it for a greedy purpose. In such a case there would be constant uneasiness and discomfort.

This world is one of God's homes. He is our Host. We are visitors, tenants at will, of the Divine Landlord. We are the guests of God in his world, and we can not enjoy it as we ought unless we are on friendly terms with him. There are things which constantly remind us that it is not our world, but God's. If we have wronged God by our conduct; if we are conscious of having sinned against him, of having taken his beautiful gifts and then churlishly forgotten him and gone our own selfish way, greedily applying the beautiful things we have taken to our own use, it will not be possible for us to have peace. "There is no peace, saith my God, to the wicked."

The first condition of peace is that we shall become harmoniously acquainted with God. And when we come to that conclusion, it is a joyous thing to know that God is willing to become acquainted with us. It was not necessary for Christ to die to make God willing to know us. Christ died because God loved us, and thought about us in our loneliness, and discomfort, and lack of peace, and sent Christ to win our hearts, and persuade us to be reconciled to him.

How rarely do we get a glimpse of the meaning of some of the sweet and tender illustrations by which God makes known his great heart full of sympathy and love toward us. Take that sentence, "Like as a father pitieth his children." The true father may be compelled to go away from home, to travel, and toil,

and run risks, and endure hardships, but the heart is turning ever toward the home and the loved ones there; so God's heart is turning ever toward us. Some one has written a little song of "A Soldier's Heart:"

"Where is the heart of a soldier,
His thought, his hope, and his dream,
When the rifles ring and the bullets sing
And the flashing sabers gleam?
O, not on the field of battle,
But far and far away,
His heart is living the old, old hopes,
While his sword is red in the fray.

Where is the heart of a soldier,
And what do the bugles wake,
And what does the roar of the cannon mean
When the hills beneath them shake?
O, not for him the glory,
And the dash and the crash of war,
But his heart is away on a mission gay
Where it hears no cannon roar!

And there is the heart of a soldier—
A little home on the hill,
A white-faced woman, a little child,
That stand by the window-sill!
A little song and a little prayer,
And a wonder in the face,
And a 'God save papa, and bring him back
In the goodness of thy grace!'

And there is the heart of a soldier—
Not on the field of fight,
But steeped in the dream of a saddened home
Where a window keeps its light,
That a soldier's feet may keep the path
And his way may homeward lead,
When under the flag of the freedom-land
He has wrought the hero's deed.

Yes, there is the heart of the soldier,
Where wife and baby are,
Though his eyes and his will may follow
The light of the battle star;
Though his hand may swing the saber,
And his bayonet charge the foe,
The soldier's heart is away, away,
In the home where they miss him so!"

And God, whose heart is like a father's, with all the universe of worlds on his hands, thinks with pitying tenderness of the lonely and the homesick and the sinful souls, whose need for him is greater than they know. No one of you need go away this morning doubting God's willingness to enter into harmonious and precious acquaintance with your soul.

How, then, may we become acquainted with God? One of the great means of acquaintanceship is to lay up the Word of God in our hearts. It is good for us to get in the habit of thinking of the Bible as God's Word. The voices that speak there are very diverse, but they all bring to us, in some way, God's message. As another has said, it ought not to trouble us that this or that writer is so exquisitely human that you feel perfectly sure, positively sure, that his production can not be divine. Many of you have heard a phonograph sing a song of Adelina Patti. It was not absolutely Adelina Patti, but it was correct. There was not one missing note in it; every word, every intonation, the liquid clearness of the beautiful voice, everything, was absolutely human. I have read of a general taking a leaf out of his pocket-book on the field of battle, handing it over to a messenger, and sending the message to some one of his officers

at a distant point on the battle-field. It was a rough missive; the man to whom it was sent kept it, however, as a memorial of the battle. It conveyed the commander's message as effectively as if it had been written on embossed paper. So God's Book has been written on odd pieces of manuscript, picked up anywhere on the rough battle-field of the ages, and it comes to us in many a different handwriting, but there is about it all a certain holy and divine influence, a certain message quality from God, that stamps it as his word. One thing is sure, that no man or woman has ever yet been found who earnestly followed the exhortation to lay up reverently in the heart the Word of God as it is found in the Bible, without entering into precious acquaintance and communion with God.

I like this little touch about "laying up" the Word of God, as though it were a precious treasure. If we will search God's Word we shall find that it is full of priceless spiritual jewels. I was reading the other day the story of the discovery of the most wonderful pearl-beds that have ever been known, along the coast of New Caledonia. And I was interested to note that it was at the greatest depth of water that the largest and most beautiful pearls were found. There are gems in God's Word, so rich a coast is it, that a wayfaring man, though a fool, may pick them up as he runs; but those who study the Bible reverently find the rarer and more splendid gems, and may lay them up against any day of famine or trial, and have them to draw upon as a storehouse of spiritual comfort.

Another way to get acquainted with God—and,

indeed, we always fail without that—is to renounce our sin. “If thou return to the Almighty, thou shalt be built up, thou shalt put away iniquity far from thy tabernacles.” There can be no harmonious acquaintance with God while sin is in our hearts or rules in our lives. In Stamford, Connecticut, two children attended service at the church of which Dr. Vail was pastor. Mr. Vail repeated the words: “There is nowhere, no place, that God is not.” In an audible whisper a little girl said to her brother: “He do n’t know about it, does he? But I ’ll tell him after church.” Just as the preacher descended the pulpit steps, a breathless little figure caught hold of him and said pantingly: “You do n’t know about God, Mr. Vail. He is n’t everywhere, like you think he is, ’cause the Bible says: ‘God is not in the thoughts of the wicked.’ That’s why he do n’t always get into me, but I am going to try to be very good this week, so he ’ll come.” And as Mr. Vail took the bright-eyed little one tenderly into his arms, she added naively: “You do n’t know everything, do you, Mr. Vail?” The pastor willingly pleaded guilty to not knowing everything, and rejoiced in the purpose of the little heart so to banish evil thoughts as to assure God’s smiling presence in her heart. Would to God we might be as wise, and so make sure of God’s acquaintance!

Another method through which we may come into close acquaintance with God is by a proper appreciation of the relative value of temporal and spiritual things. This is very clearly pointed out in the verses connected with our text. “Then shalt thou lay up gold as dust, and the gold of Ophir as the stones of

the brooks." We get a good deal clearer idea of the meaning if we take the Revised Version: "If thou put away unrighteousness far from thy tents, and lay thou thy treasure in the dust, and the gold of Ophir among the stones in the brooks," then "the Almighty shall be thy treasure, and precious silver unto thee." It is right for us to have a proper desire for the good things of this life. It is proper to lay up something for a "rainy day." God has given us the fore-looking instinct, and it is declared that if a man does not care for his own family and those rightfully dependent upon him, he is the very worst sort of an infidel. But in doing this we should not forget that these treasures of the earth are but temporary, and that the great spiritual treasures, of which earthly treasures are but types, are eternal. The soul never can be fed on the perishable things of the world. As well might the Prodigal Son try to feed himself on the husks fed to the swine, or the rich fool seek to satisfy his soul on the goods stored in his barn, as for us to-day to undertake to find peace and comfort in the fragile treasures of this world. Only the Bread of Life can give us that satisfaction. Dr. Roswell Hitchcock tells the story of a Bedouin in the desert who was starving for food. But he still pressed on, hoping that some other traveler who had passed that way might have left by accident, or intending to return, a package of food. Finally, away beyond, near a fountain, he saw what he took to be a traveler's bag, and his gnawing hunger told him that it must contain bread. Slowly and painfully he pulled himself over the hot sand to the little bundle. He took it up and poured

out before his hungry eyes a stream of glorious gems. As the sun lighted up their splendor, he fell back with a cry of despair, "O, it is only diamonds, only diamonds!" Diamonds, that other men give their souls for, were but a cruel mockery to a dying man when starving for bread. Do not starve your soul! Do not exchange the Bread of Life for the perishing treasures of the world!

Let us look for a moment at the result of this acquaintance with God. The first result is delight—delight in fellowship with God and with his people. For acquaintance with God brings us into the most joyous fellowship this world has ever known among human beings. Go where you will around the globe, and if you are a sincere Christian you can drop anywhere into a company of men and women—it may be of a different color, of a different race and language—and when they begin to tell of the goodness of God, and their eyes brighten and glisten with remembrance of the coming of the Divine love into their lives, you feel that you are among brothers, and are ready to sing:

"Blest be the tie that binds
Our hearts in Christian love;
The fellowship of kindred minds
Is like to that above."

It is God's purpose to fill the world with this delightful fellowship. Dr. John Clifford, speaking of the proposed Anglo-American alliance, says that our poets are always first to recognize the trend of human thought, and to express to us the aspirations of men.

Walt Whitman, rapt in ecstasy, gives voice to this feeling, saying:

"I will make divine, magnetic worlds,
With the love of comrades,
With the life-long love of comrades."

And then he asks:

"What whispers are these, O lands, running ahead of you,
Passing under the seas?
Are all nations communing? Is there going to be but one
heart to the globe?"

And every sincere Christian who has caught the optimism of Jesus Christ may join Dr. Clifford in answering: "Yes; but one heart to the globe"—that is what there is going to be. Humanity is one. God has made us of one blood, and Jesus Christ is making us one in soul, one in moral ideas, one in public spirit, one in unselfish service, one in passionate enthusiasm, to get rid of sin from among men, and to bring in and establish an everlasting righteousness.

Another result of this acquaintance with God is a joyous fearlessness which will lead us into an atmosphere of life where prayer will be as natural as communication with our nearest and dearest friend. "For then shalt thou delight thyself in the Almighty, and shalt lift up thy face unto God. Thou shalt make thy prayer unto him, and he shall hear thee." Thank God, the world is full of illustrations of this precious result of the heart's acquaintance with God! Harriet Beecher Stowe said of the habits which produced the spirituality of her mother, which filled her home with abiding sunshine, that she had a divine magic, if it

be magic, to commune daily with the supernatural. She had a little room, all her own, where on a stand always stood open the great family Bible, and when work pressed hard, and the children were perverse, or when sickness threatened and the skeins of life were in a snarl, she went quietly to that room, and, kneeling over that Bible, took hold of a warm, healing, invisible Hand that made the rough places plain. Such a sweet acquaintance with God is gloriously possible for each of us. When William Arthur, the noble author of "The Tongue of Fire," was in this country making an address to a company of preachers, he stopped suddenly in the midst of his words, and, pointing with his great arm upward, said impressively to the rapt listeners, "Keep the intercourse open there." So I say to you, whatever we do, or do not do, let us keep the way open for friendship with Heaven.

Only a single other result must I detain you to notice, and that is that such an acquaintance results in a flood of light upon the path, that shall grow brighter as the years go on. Listen to the hopeful words: "And light shall shine upon thy ways. When they cast thee down, thou shalt say, There is lifting up; and the humble person he shall save. He shall deliver even him that is not innocent: yea, he shall be delivered through the cleanness of thine hands." Ah, what a bright way is that, which is marked out for the acquaintance of God! Light from heaven shall fall upon our path. It will be impossible to discourage us; for who can keep us down when God is ready to lift us up again, and put us on our feet? I heard a man say about another man the other day, speaking of his

business career, that he had failed two or three times, but finally came to great success because, when he failed, his father stepped in and made good his losses and advanced him capital for a new start. The Christian has all the capital of Almighty God to back him in his career. His way is a shining way, that shall shine "more and more unto the perfect day."

Which way do you face? Are you looking toward God and his friendship, or is your face turned away from him, going toward the darkness? I do not care how deep may be the darkness about you now, there is hope for you if your face is turned toward the light, and you are willing to let God lead you on the climb upward toward the heights of eternal glory. If there is a soul here that is discouraged and disheartened by sin, I want to urge upon you your privilege of turning your back on the darkness, and of turning your face toward the light.

"The ivy in a dungeon grew,
Unfed by rain, uncheered by dew;
The pallid leaflets only drank
Cave-moistures foul and odors dank.

But, through the dungeon-grating high,
There fell a sunbeam from the sky;
It slept upon the grateful floor
In silent gladness, evermore.

The ivy felt a tremor shoot
Through all its fibers to the root;
It felt the light, it saw the ray,
It strove to blossom into day.

It grew, it crept, it pushed, it clomb—
Long had the darkness been its home;
But well it knew, though veiled in night,
The goodness and the joy of light.

The Lord's Arrows

It reached the beam, it thrilled, it curled,
It blessed the warmth that cheers the world;
It rose toward the dungeon bars—
It looked upon the sun and stars.

It felt the life of bursting spring,
It heard the happy skylark sing;
It caught the breath of morns and eves,
And wooed the swallow to its leaves.

By rains, and dews, and sunshine fed,
Over the outer wall it spread;
And in the daybeam waving free,
It grew into a steadfast tree.

Would'st know the moral of the rhyme?
Behold the heavenly light, and climb!
To every dungeon comes a ray
Of God's own bright, eternal day!"

XV

Christ's Stairway up into the Blessed Life

And seeing the multitudes, he went up into a mountain; and when he was set, his disciples came unto him and he opened his mouth, and taught them, saying: Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed are they that mourn, for they shall be comforted. Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth. Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness, for they shall be filled. Blessed are the merciful, for they shall obtain mercy. Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God. Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called the children of God. Blessed are they which are persecuted for righteousness' sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed are ye, when men shall revile you, and persecute you, and shall say all manner of evil against you falsely, for my sake. Rejoice, and be exceeding glad, for great is your reward in heaven, for so persecuted they the prophets which were before you.—*Matthew v, 1-12.*

SOME Scripture students have called these eight Beatitudes eight gates into the kingdom of God; and Joseph Parker says that if there is no other one of these gates through which he can enter into the kingdom, he is sure of entrance through the gate which has over its portal, "Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness." But I am sure if he could get through that one, he could get through any one of the others. It does not seem to me that the comparison to gates is a happy one, for it suggests a doctrine which is certainly not true. Its natural

inference would be that it would be possible for a man to please Christ through his meekness without being pure in heart, or that another might hope for salvation because he was merciful, while all the time he was stirring up strife and had no fellowship with the peacemakers. Still another might hope to go through the mourners' gate without fidelity to Christ under persecution. Its inferential teaching, indeed, would be that it is possible for us so to abound in one virtue that we do not need to give heed to the others. That is, a man who has a big stock of mercy can afford to be short on repentance; or a woman with a large store of meekness may be careless about purity of heart. Of course no one would advocate such a theory in so many words, yet is it not true that in practical life there are a good many people who have a vague idea that they are going to balance accounts that way? But such a thought is very repugnant to Scriptural teaching. Christ surely intends to teach that the genuine Christian life should be adorned with all these blessings, should be meek as well as merciful, poor in spirit as well as pure in heart, a peacemaker as surely as ambitious for righteousness, and as truly repentant as loyal to Christ. Not one of these characteristics can be left out, but every one belongs to the well-rounded, full-orbed Christian character.

I prefer to compare these eight Beatitudes of our Lord to eight steps at the doorway of a temple. Now a step is different from a door. You may go through one door and ignore all the rest. They are not necessary to you, since you can get in without them. But

in climbing a stairway no step is unimportant. You must climb over them all in order to reach your place in the building. Let us examine these steps into the temple of the blessed life. I think you will see how well they are arranged in the order given.

We naturally expect to find at the very foundation of the stairway the blessing on the poor in spirit. For the first thing a man does in becoming a Christian is to empty himself of his own selfishness and lose confidence in his power to accomplish his own salvation. This Beatitude has been often confused in many minds by an incorrect idea of what the phrase "poor in spirit" means. It does not mean "poor-spirited." It does not mean "mean-spirited" or "base-spirited." It has no relation whatever to one's riches or poverty in this world's goods. A man may be as wealthy as Abraham, and yet be truly poor in spirit, as Abraham was. On the other hand, a man may be very poor in worldly riches, and yet have a proud and arrogant spirit. Plato once invited Diogenes to visit him. Diogenes, who was a most cynical man, found Plato living in a comfortable manner. His house was luxuriously furnished. Easy-chairs and pleasant pictures abounded. Diogenes came in with his feet stained with mud, and said, as he walked upon the beautiful carpets, "Thus I trample on the pride of Plato." The good philosopher paid no attention at the time, but when he returned the visit and saw the scanty furniture and the ragged covering of the floor of the house in which the other ostentatiously lived, he said, "I see the pride of Diogenes through the holes in his carpet." To be poor in spirit is simply to be emptied of self

and to trust not in ourselves for our salvation, but humbly to rely upon the Divine mercy. You may see a signal illustration of the truly poor in spirit in the case of Job. When messenger after messenger came to him with a tale of disaster, telling of the destruction of his flocks and herds, and finally of the sudden death of his children, the ancient story tells us that "Then Job arose, and rent his mantle, and shaved his head, and fell down upon the ground, and worshiped, and said, Naked came I out of my mother's womb, and naked shall I return thither: the Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away; blessed be the name of the Lord. In all this Job sinned not, nor charged God foolishly." On the other hand, you may find just as clear an illustration of the people who are wickedly rich in spirit in the persons who are described in the Book of Revelation, of whom the Lord says, "Because thou sayest, I am rich, and increased with goods, and have need of nothing; and knowest not that thou art wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked: I counsel thee to buy of me gold tried in the fire, that thou mayest be rich; and white raiment, that thou mayest be clothed, and that the shame of thy nakedness do not appear; and anoint thine eyes with eyesalve, that thou mayest see."

The next step in the stairway is the step of the mourners. There are certain kinds of mourners to whom, undoubtedly, this blessing applies. It applies to every one that mourns because of sin. For every such heart that will turn away from sin and accept Christ there is forgiveness; the sweetest comfort in the world. There is comfort also to all those who

are broken-hearted and who long for sympathy, and for the Divine assurance that all will be well with those who trust God. Real sorrow, that causes real mourning, is never of the body, but of the spirit, and only our Heavenly Father can give us spiritual comfort. Some one beautifully says that "Upon the margin of celestial streams alone those simples grow which cure the heartache." It is a blessed stepping-stone for all those who mourn over sinners that they long to win to Christ; for they, too, shall find comfort. The psalmist says: "They that sow in tears shall reap in joy. He that goeth forth and weepeth, bearing precious seed, shall doubtless come again with rejoicing, bringing his sheaves with him." We are not in a lonely world, whose God has withdrawn to let it take its chances with fate. God watches over his children.

"O aching heart, with sorrow torn,
The Lord is near and knows;
He knows it all, the feet way-worn,
The weary cares and woes,
The load of grief in anguish borne;
Thy Lord is near—He knows.

O fainting soul, with doubts oppressed,
The Lord is near and knows;
He knows it all, how thou art pressed
On every side with foes,
He waits to be thy cherished guest;
Thy Lord is near—He knows.

O weary head, that fain would rest,
The Lord is near and knows;
He knows it all, and on His breast
Thou mayest now repose.
Drop every care at His behest;
Thy Lord is near—He knows,

O lonely one, live thou thy best,
Thy Lord is near and knows;
He knows it all, sees every test,
Yes, every tear that flows;
Rejoice, faint heart, His way is best,
Thy Lord is near—He knows."

The next is the step of the meek, and that does not mean, as some people seem to imagine, that it is the step of the weak. William Cullen Bryant, in a poem describing the languor of October light, writes:

"Suns grow meek and the meek suns grow brief."

In this line the poet evidently means that suns grow weak, and the weak suns grow brief, and that confusion of meekness with weakness is very common. But it is certainly not taught in the Scriptures. In the Old Testament Moses is the typical man of meekness, but no man ever thinks of Moses as a weakling. The lawgiver, the man of iron and granite, whose character grows in majesty as the centuries go on, can hardly be taken as a synonym for weakness; and in this Beatitude we are assured that the meek shall inherit the earth.

It is a natural step from the meek to the ideal. Meekness indicates humility and quiet patience, and those qualities are ever at the beginning of noble aspirations. "Blessed are they that do hunger and thirst after righteousness: for they shall be filled." Hunger and thirst are ever necessary accompaniments to joy and satisfaction in receiving blessings. A banquet means nothing to a man who has no appetite. There is nothing more strange to find in this world, and

nothing more unnatural, than a man without an appetite for knowledge of and communion with God. Phillips Brooks said that a man who might carve statues and paint pictures, spending his life in making mock flowers out of wax or paper, was wise compared to the man who might have God for company, and yet shut God out and lived an empty life. It is a blessed thing to live in this spiritual zest for noble things in conversation and in conduct.

This beautiful incident is given of the poet Whittier: He was visiting Celia Thaxter, who was in a large hotel on the Isle of Shoals. There was a company of her friends gathered in her parlor, and much idle talk by idle people. Whittier sat silent, longing for something which would uplift the conversation. He brought out a little book, and asked Celia Thaxter to read from it. When she had finished the page he took up the thread of discourse, forgetting his natural shyness, and dwelt long and earnestly on the beauty and necessity of worship—a necessity consequent upon the nature of man, upon his own weakness, and the consciousness of the Divine Spirit within him. His whole heart was stirred, and he poured himself out upon his listeners as if he longed, like the prophet of old, to breathe a new life into them.

It is glorious, it is Christlike, to live in that spirit! And do not imagine that common toil, which seems rude and earthly, need shut out the Christ-spirit, for we must never forget that Jesus Christ spent most of his life in the rough toil of the carpenter-shop, and to him his carpenter-work must have been made romantic and splendid because of the zest with which

he did the Father's will. Alice Ranlett sings a very helpful strain of the Carpenter Christ:

"That evening, when the Carpenter swept out
The fragment shavings from the workshop floor,
And placed the tools in order and shut-to
And barred for the last time the humble door,
And, going on his way to save the world,
Turned from the laborer's lot for evermore,
I wonder—was He glad?

That morning, when the Carpenter walked forth
From Joseph's doorway, in the glimmering light,
And bade his holy mother long farewell,
And, through the rose-shot skies with dawning bright,
Saw glooming the dark shadow of the Cross,
Yet, seeing, set his feet toward Calvary's height,
I wonder—was He sad?

Ah! when the Carpenter went on his way,
He thought not for himself for good or ill,
One was his path through shop or thronging men
Craving his help e'en to the Cross-crowned hill;
In toiling, healing, teaching, suffering—all
His joy, his life, to do his Father's will;
And earth and heaven are glad!"

To a soul full of zest and enthusiasm for the highest things in life, the next step—the step of the merciful—comes as a matter of course. For as we come into fellowship with Christ in seeking to do the will of God, we absorb and become mastered by his spirit of mercy. In building up a great Christian manhood, mercy must be a large ingredient. One of the characters in a recent novel, "The Latimers," is represented as proposing to give the proper ingredients in a righteously-constructed religion. She says: "Now,

Miss Latimer, I quite agree with you. The doctor is a most worthy man, an' l'arnt in Scriptur', an' all that. He's a powerful theologian, and has the five p'int's of Calvinism at his fingers' ends, an' several p'int's of overplus, I allow. But, bless your pretty face, when it comes to human natur', he has a heap to l'arn. My mother, God bless her! use tuh say that religion was mixed a deal like her receipt for cup-cake—one of butter, two of sugar, three of flour, and four aigs. One of theology, says she, two of human natur', three of downright honesty, and four of charity. Beat 'em up well with sound common sense, says she, an' there's a religion good enough for a Christian or anybody else. Now, you see, Miss, the doctor has the theology in good heft, an' maybe some of the other ingrejents, too, but he's powerful short on human natur'." I think the old lady's idea of putting the ingredient of mercy the highest in proportion in her ideal of religious character is sound. Shakespeare had the same idea about it. In the "Merchant of Venice" he makes Portia say:

" The quality of mercy is not strained:
It droppeth as the gentle rain from heaven
Upon the place beneath. It is twice blessed;
It blesseth him that gives, and him that takes.
'T is mightiest in the mightiest. It becomes
The thronèd monarch better than his crown;
His scepter shows the force of temporal power,
The attribute to awe and majesty,
Wherein doth sit the dread and fear of kings;
But mercy is above this sceptered sway;
It is enthronèd in the heart of kings,
It is an attribute to God himself;
And earthly power doth then show likest God's
When mercy seasons justice."

Very appropriately the next is the step of the heart. "Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God." Not only shall the pure heart see God after awhile in heaven—it sees him here and now, and is at peace because of it. Guilt is always weak, and purity is always strong. Dr. Haynes says: "I have seen the hawk flap out of the top of the tall hemlocks at my coming in the pasture. 'Why, hawk, I'll not shoot you; it is but a walking-stick I carry in my hand.' But the hawk thinks there may be a ball in it, and he sails high above the village steeple. 'Nay, hawk,' says the steeple, 'I'll not hurt. I'm but the finger pointing to your Maker.' But the hawk thinks that it is a trap, and lives in fear and trembling, notwithstanding his great strength and his sharp claws. But the dove will live in the loft of the barn, or under the cornice of the house, and nods good-morning to the babies in the chamber-crib. It touches the foot of the housemaid as she shakes her cloth of crumbs; it rests up in the steeple of the old village church, and the Sabbath-bell, far from being a fright, is but the signal for the cooing chorus to begin. So the man or the woman of pure heart is blessed with peaceful self-respect. We are never happy unless we can respect ourselves. And we can never respect ourselves if we are living in communion with bad thoughts, and have the secret chambers of our imagination defiled with evil pictures. It is only when the heart is pure, so that Christ may dwell there and our eyes behold him with joy, that we are strong and brave in the consciousness of this Divine fellowship."

The next is the step of the peacemakers, and a man who has climbed up to this point is in a good spirit to do the work of the peacemaker. To such a soul strife will be hateful, and all the brood of evil things such as gossip, and slander, and backbiting will be loathsome. There is no sweeter blessing to win in this world than the blessing of the peacemaker. To go about in the spirit of the Master, with such patience and forbearance and self-mastery as will make it possible to draw the deadly virus of hate and prejudice out of other hearts and bind them together again with bonds of mutual sympathy and fellowship—that, indeed, is a glorious part to take in the great work of salvation which Christ is carrying forward in this world.

Mrs. Ellen Gates says that she caught a poetic vision of the peacemakers in the heavenly beyond. She sings:

“I thought I saw, upon the shining coast,
A mighty host.
Their eyes were luminous with joy and peace,
That would not cease.
Somehow they seemed more loyal and more blest
Than all the rest.
Yet ever did they wonder that their names
Met loud acclaims,
And that such honor unto them was given
In highest heaven.
They had not borne the banners in the strife
Of mortal life.
Their foreheads had not felt the touch of wreaths
Which fame bequeaths
To conquering heroes as they homeward march
Through Victory's arch.

The Lord's Arrows

These were the souls that, when the strife was high,
 Made soft reply;
The men and women who could patient stand,
 And make demand
For peace, peace only, though their pride was crossed,
 Their dear hopes lost.
Oft they had caught, with soft and naked hands,
 The flaming brands
Which anger hurled, and quenched, before it fell,
 Some fire of hell.
They did not dream how great their souls had grown;
 No sculptured stone
Was piled above their ashes when they slept;
 But God had kept
Their faces in his sight; He knew the cost.
 When, passion-tossed
And sorely hurt, they patient came and went,
 On peace intent.
Now they are 'blessed' evermore, and lo!
 Where'er they go
The angels look on them and smile, and say:
 'God's children they!'"

And, finally, we stand on the top step, and the open door of all the glories of the temple of God are before us as we come to the stone of loyalty and fidelity to God. A consciousness of fidelity to trust always carries with it its own peculiar blessing. It is related that Whitefield and one of his fellow-workers were much annoyed, one night at a public house, by a set of gamblers in the room adjoining where they slept. Their noisy clamor and horrid blasphemy so excited Whitefield's abhorrence for their sins, and so awakened his anxiety for their souls, that he could not rest. "I will go to them, and reprove their wickedness," said he. His companion remonstrated in vain.

He went. His words of reproof were apparently powerless upon them. Returning, he lay down to sleep. His companion asked him, "What did you gain by it?" "A soft pillow," he said, and soon fell asleep. Whitefield's reply is in perfect harmony with the declarations made in these closing verses of the Beatitudes. If we are loyal to Christ we shall receive the blessing whether the result of our fidelity is apparent or not. That is a hard lesson for us to learn—that we are not to take apparent results as a measure of our duty. We are to be loyal and steadfast, and God will take care of the result.

God forbid that any of us who have studied together this Christian stairway, with its eight splendid stones, leading up into the blessed Christ-life, should go away and say, "It is beautiful, it is noble, but it is too hard for me; I can not attain unto it." It is not too hard, it is not impossible for any one. God does not mock men with these beautiful pictures; they are for us, his sons and his daughters. Let us rather, with humility and faith, say lovingly with Paul, "I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me!"

XVI

A Poor Best Better than a Rich Compromise

Even such as he is able to get.—*Lev. xiv, 31.*

THE story of the text is a graphic illustration of the truth that God never asks impossibilities of men. The chapter is devoted to the plan of redemption for poor lepers. They were to obtain cleansing by bringing a sin-offering to the priest, which he offered to the Lord in the leper's behalf. The regular offering was three lambs and three-tenth deals of flour. But if he was a poor man, and was not able to bring three lambs, then he was permitted to bring one lamb and one-tenth deal of flour; and instead of the other two lambs, two turtle-doves. And if he was so impoverished that to bring two turtle-doves was beyond his ability, then he might bring two pigeons, "such as he is able to get."

There is a tendency on the part of some people to throw up their hands in astonishment and despair at the great demands which Christianity makes for purity of heart and conduct. They say such a life is beyond the possibilities of human nature in this modern world in which we live. To such the text says, "God never asks an impossibility of you; he only asks that you shall bring him in return for what he has done for you such as you are able to get." You are not to be judged on anybody else's resources, but on your own.

If I say to you, "A man ought to live the best life he can," you agree at once to that proposition; and that is all the Lord asks of anybody. And I stand here to declare to any man or woman here that if you will do the best you can, the Lord will be perfectly pleased with you. There are a great many people who are ready to say about their conduct, "I know my life is not up to the Christian standard; it is full of mistakes and sins;" and then they sigh and say, "But I did the best I could." It is an awful thing for men to say under such circumstances. If you did the best you could, then God was perfectly pleased with your life, and it did come up to the Christian standard. The trouble is, we know we did n't do the best we could, and we have been making easy compromises with ourselves. So it is that we cheat our souls of the rich blessings of peace that can only come to a genuine and thorough life.

This is really a very great test which is set up in our text. It is a statement that God can never be satisfied with anything less than the best. He knows us perfectly, and is fully aware of what we are capable of doing; we never cheat him for a moment. And when we bring our best, though it may be a small amount in service or worship, still, if it is our best, and the best we can get, it is a far greater amount in the eyes of his perfect justice than a thousand times as much service or gift would be if it came from a person who had eleven hundred times as much ability. This truth is very clearly set forth in Christ's estimate of the people who cast their gifts into the treasury in his presence on one occasion. Some men cast in large

gifts, but one poor woman came along and threw in only two mites; yet Jesus, looking on, said, "She has cast in more than they all!" Why? Because she was the only one that had brought the best she could get, for out of her penury she cast in all the living that she had. It is easy to give of our superfluity, for we shall not miss it; but this woman had done all she could.

Now this is not unnatural in any way. Here is a family of children. The father would not be satisfied to have the boy ten or twelve years old answer questions in baby talk, but for the baby two years old there is an added charm to the response because the baby brings all the skill he is able to get, and that is always satisfactory.

There is this suggestion, also, in our text, that when a man brings the best he has, God often enlarges it and causes it to grow into something better. In the parable of the talents the one who had two gained two more beside them, and the one who had five gained five others, and the one that was taken away from the poor sluggard who had hidden his Lord's money, was also given to the man who had ten. And the promise of Christ is that those who have been faithful in few things shall be trusted in much. If a man brings what he can get, though it be small, and consecrates it completely to God's service, God enlarges the man's capital. And that again is true to common life.

A well-known judge, who used to live in Cincinnati, related the story of how on one occasion he wanted a fence mended. He called in a sturdy young

carpenter to do the job. When he came, the judge said to him:

"I want this fence mended. There are some unplanned boards; use them. You need not take time to make it a neat job. I will only pay you a dollar and a half."

Later the judge found the man carefully planing each board. Supposing he was trying to make a costly job, he ordered him to nail them on just as they were, and continued his walk. When he returned, the boards were all planed and numbered ready for nailing.

"I told you I did not care how this fence looked," said the judge, angrily.

"I do," said the carpenter, carefully measuring his work. When it was done, there was no other part of the fence as thorough in finish.

"How much do you charge?" asked the judge.

"A dollar and a half," said the man, shouldering his tools.

The judge stared. "Why did you spend all that labor on that fence, if not for the money?"

"For the job, sir."

"Nobody would have seen the poor work on it."

"But I should have known it was there."

The judge offered him more, but he refused to take anything in addition to his dollar and a half, and went away.

Ten years afterward, the judge had a contract to give for the erection of several magnificent public buildings. There were many applicants among the master-builders, but the face of one caught his eye.

"It was my man of the fence," said the judge. "I knew he would have only good, genuine work done. I gave him the contract, and it made him a rich man."

And the judge was acting only in obedience to the Divine law. The man who is faithful in little, God will trust in much. If we bring what we can get, the best that is within our reach, God will never despise it, and he will bless it, and use it, and multiply it in our hands.

We have in our theme, also, the suggestion that it is never right or wise for us to give up in discouragement because things are not better than they are. We should take things as they are, do the best we can, and make the best out of what we have. Many people withhold their testimony in the social service because they can not begin eloquently; many keep back their small amounts from God's treasury because they can not give large sums; many withhold the cordial handshake and the gracious smile of sympathy because opportunities for bearing great burdens for their fellow-men are denied them; many grow discouraged and fall out by the wayside because what they call an ideal life is impossible. But that is not wise or right; God does not ask us to give the money, or the testimony, or the service which is beyond our power. He who took one lamb at the altar instead of three, and pigeons instead of turtle-doves, and gave to them just as great a blessing, will accept your stammering speech, or your pennies, or your shy sympathy, and bestow upon it his Divine blessing. Let us make the best out of what we have. Do not look at its worst side, but at its best side. It makes a great differ-

ence whether you look at the positive or negative side of a situation. Things cheer up wonderfully when you keep your eye on the cheerful side.

“There’s many a rest on the road of life,
If we only could stop to take it;
And many a tone from the better land,
If the querulous heart would wake it.
To the sunny soul that is full of hope,
And whose beautiful trust ne’er faileth,
The grass is green and the flowers are bright,
Though the wintry storm prevailleth.

Better to hope though the clouds hang low,
And to keep the eyes still lifted,
For the sweet blue sky will soon peep through
When the ominous clouds are rifted.
There was never a night without a day,
Nor an evening without a morning,
And the darkest hour, the proverb goes,
Is the hour before the dawning.

There’s many a gem in the path of life
Which we pass in idle pleasure,
That is richer far than a jeweled crown
Or the miser’s hoarded treasure.
It may be the love of a little child,
Or a mother’s prayer to heaven,
Or only a beggar’s grateful thanks
For a cup of water given.

Better to weave in the web of life
A bright and golden filling,
And do God’s will with a ready heart,
And hands that are swift and willing,
Than to snap the delicate silver threads
Of our curious lives asunder,
And then blame Heaven for the tangled ends,
And sit and grieve and wonder.”

There ought to be great comfort in our text for any who feel that they have seen better days, and are not able to bring in many ways as much to God in service as they could have brought at some other time. Sometimes a man says mournfully, "There was a time when the greatest things were possible to me; but I squandered my opportunities and my privileges, and now it is too late." But our text says to such a man, "Bring what you are able to get now, and God will accept that." And many a man who has followed that advice, plucking up courage again at the very gates of despair, has been astonished beyond measure to find how marvelously God was able to use and bless the fragments of his career that were left.

There is a very interesting story in the Book of Jeremiah of how the Lord helped him to prepare one of his sermons. Jeremiah was prone to look on the dark side of things. He was such a man as Jeremiah the weeper. He was very much disappointed, and thought that even the Lord was not able to help save his rebellious and wicked congregation. But the Lord told him to go down to the potter's house, and while he was there, he saw the potter take a piece of clay and place it on the wheel. And as the discouraged preacher watched the operation, he saw that unsightly bit of clay rise beneath the potter's skillful hand into a very beautiful vessel. But just as it was being completed, some fault, in the clay perhaps, caused it to go to pieces, and it crumbled under the hands of the workman, falling over the wheel and on to the ground. By this time the preacher had for-

gotten his stubborn congregation, and was greatly interested in the work of the potter. He thought the potter would, without doubt, take a new piece of clay, and throw away that which had failed him. But he did not. Instead, he stooped down and with his hands gathered up the broken clay from where it had fallen on the ground, and, kneading it together into a compact mass again, placed it once more upon the wheel. And as Jeremiah watched, he saw a new vessel, not exactly the same as the other, but one fair and beautiful, rise to its completion, and soon it stood, a perfect creation, ready to be taken to the kiln to be burned and made permanent.

Jeremiah had learned his sermon, and I am sure that some of you here ought to hear the same sermon from God. Years ago you were on God's wheel, and under his loving hand you were being formed and shaped into a beautiful character. Then something happened—I do not know, perhaps you do not know perfectly—only God knows clearly what it was that caused those fair purposes, those sweet promises of a noble life, to crumble into a broken ruin. But, thank God, you need not lie there marred and broken in your despair, fit only to be thrown on the waste-heap. If you will give God what you can get now, what there is left, he will put you again on his wheel; and though he may not make of you what once he might, he will still build a womanhood or a manhood that shall be helpful and beautiful to the eyes of men and angels.

This text ought to comfort us and silence all worry and fretting because things are not better.

Bring God what you can get, and leave it to him. If it is your best, he knows it, and he will make the best thing possible out of it. He is not only able, but he is willing, to do a great deal better for you than you can ask or conceive. To worry about it is to distrust God. It is right for us to keep looking up to him with reverence and loving appeal, but not to worry.

One of the most spiritual of English ministers says that the attitude of the Christian ought to be like that of a dog which he once had in his house. The dog used to worry his master to be fed at dinner, but he never got any food that way. After awhile the dog learned wisdom, and adopted a plan which always brought a satisfactory result. He would sit under the table, and put one paw on the master's knee. He would never bark, never leap around, never worry his master, but he sat under the table with that one paw on his knee, and that conquered the man; he could not resist that appeal. Although the wife said he never must do it, he kept putting little morsels under the table. Now, that is the way we ought to live—submissive to God's will, with our hand on God's knee.

This is, after all, the only perfectly ideal life. People talk about an ideal life as though it were something unnatural; but an ideal life is simply to do your best every time, to do your best with circumstances that are trite and commonplace just as surely as when dealing with those that are romantic and splendid. Some one sings:

“If I were a cobbler it would be my pride
The best of all cobblers to be;
If I were a tinker, no tinker beside
Should mend an old kettle like me.”

Now, that is what I mean by an ideal life. We are to bring the ideal spirit into the commonest affairs of life. Anything that is worth doing at all is worth doing in an ideal way. If it seems to you to-day that you have but little to work with, then take courage: God does n't ask you to bring what you have n't got. Bring what you 're able to get. Back at the last analysis, every sinner, rich or poor, has to borrow all his capital from Christ.

I have heard of an oil-vender in an English street, who informed an inquirer that no serious outlay was demanded in order to go into his business; nothing need be paid for but a tap, a measure, and a funnel.

"How about the oil and the wheelbarrow?"

"It 's this 'ere way, sir: If y'er a straight 'un, yer can do like me. Fust yer borrows a barrer on the strength of yer honesty; then yer goes to the oil-dealer, and gets tick on the strength of yer barrer."

It's like that with us. We really have no credit and no capital until Christ stands security for us. Thank God, he is willing to do that, and that is all-sufficient. Bring the poor broken fragments to him, and he will take our poverty and let us draw on his unlimited credit for all we need. We have our strength and our beauty and our glory that is to come all through him. We are to follow him, not in our own strength, but through his Divine help, until we come to be like him, and dwell with him in glory. Mr. Meyer paraphrases that last prayer of Christ for his disciples (which was also a prayer for us) into something like this: "Father, I have glorified thee on the earth; I have finished the work which

thou gavest me to do. Now I come to thee, and behind me there are millions of spirits that are following on the way that I have made for them; millions who are to believe in me, to become united with me by faith, and who soon will come to be with me where I am. I ask nothing for myself—it is enough for me to be with thee again; but I ask for them that thou wouldst give to me, as their representative, the fullness of the Holy Ghost, that what I have had I may be able to communicate to them.” So Christ communicates to us the very spirit of the living God; and through our touch with him we are strong in his great strength. And in all the upward climb toward the glory of heaven we are safe so long as we are joined to him.

Two travelers engaged three guides to take them to the top of a great mountain in Switzerland. They were going to make a very rugged ascent up the side of a mountain, a piece of ice which was almost as steep as the side of a house. When they reached the spot, they roped themselves together: a guide, a traveler, another guide, a traveler, and following him a guide. They commenced to climb, and, by cutting notches in the ice-wall, they were able to place the toes of their feet. So they crept up, and had nearly reached the top, when in some way the last man lost his footing, and began to sway. He pulled down the man above him, and he, too, began to swing slowly to and fro. The two pulled down the third, and the third the fourth, and all four were swinging over the precipice in imminent danger of being dashed to pieces. The only thing that kept them

was the rope around the waist of the first man. As soon as he felt the strain, he took his ice ax and drove it deep into the ice just above him, and held to it for life; and, being a strong man, standing steadfast for an instant or two, the man next him regained his footing; the man beneath, his, and so on to the end of the line; and the whole five stood, saved because the first man stood.

Let us learn the great lesson: We have no power. The best we can do is little and insignificant. We swing to and fro above the gaping ruin. But by faith we tie ourselves about the heart of Christ; and because he is strong, standing sure in the glory of God, we shall be pulled up out of all the troubles and temptations and dangers of life, and stand at last at his side.

XVII

Birds of Passage

It came to pass.—*1 Chron. xix, 1.*

BRIEF as it is, that will serve for the history of a great majority of the experiences with which we have to do in this world. When you sum up the aggregate of the happenings of life that are transient, that are constantly on the wing, that "came to pass," and have passed or are passing, you will be astonished to see how little there is left. It does not require the voice of inspiration to tell us that "the fashion of this world passeth away," and that man "shall pass away as the flower of the grass." It is like the birds which enliven street and garden and forest with their chirping or their songs or picturesque presence. A very few of them remain with us all the year round and brighten our life in December as in June; but the great majority of the feathered denizens of the woods are birds of passage. They spend with us a little season to build their nests and rear their young, or come for a winter visit, and then they are gone. Many others stay with us only a few days or weeks, on their passage to and from other climes which form their summer and winter homes. Others yet only fly over our heads. Longfellow had our theme in his mind, when standing out beside the Charles River in Massachusetts one evening, when "the night was fair."

The birds flying past caught his attention and awoke his song:

“And above, in the light
Of the star-lit night,
Swift birds of passage wing their flight
Through the dewy atmosphere.

I hear the beat
Of their pinions fleet,
As from the land of snow and sleet
They seek a southern lea.

I hear the cry
Of their voices high
Falling dreamily through the sky,
But their forms I can not see.

O, say not so!
Those sounds that flow
In murmurs of delight and woe
Come not from wings of birds,

They are the throngs
Of poet's songs,
Murmurs of pleasures, and pains, and wrongs,
The sound of wingèd words.

This is the cry
Of souls that high
On toiling, beating pinions, fly,
Seeking a warmer clime.

From their distant flight
Through realms of light
It falls into our world of night,
With the murmuring sounds of rhyme.”

It is of these birds of passage that I wish to speak.
I can not mention them all, for that would be to make
a catalogue of the visible universe and of much that

is invisible. I can only lay the emphasis here and there, where I may hope to impart some lesson that will make us wiser in using those experiences which are, in the very nature of the case, birds of passage, and in encouraging us to deepen our love and devotion for those songsters of the soul that may abide with us forever.

If I may begin at the beginning, childhood is a bird of passage. One may not speak it for the benefit of the children directly, for they will not know it in any helpful sense until it is too late to tell them for their own good. We may only impress the matter on ourselves who are grown, that the child-life that comes under our influence shall feel more gracious kindness in our spirit. There is nothing more sad to me than to see a child, a little child, robbed of happiness and of the privileges and opportunities of a wholesome growth—physical, intellectual, and spiritual. One should never lose the opportunity of giving gladness to a child.

When I was only seven years old, a barefooted boy walking home from the district school in Oregon, I was overtaken by a very genteelly-dressed man, who was riding in the first nice buggy I ever saw. He was driving alone, and as he came up, he stopped and called to me with the greatest deference and respect, and said he was lonesome, and wished I would take a ride with him. I got up beside him, very much awed by the situation; but his kindness soon drew me out, until I was telling him all of my little world. He questioned me as to my thoughts about what I was to do when I became a man, and said a great many

kind and interesting things to me about manhood and the larger life I might live after awhile. The meeting with that man was an epoch in my life. The deference and respect with which he greeted me, and the serious dignity with which he treated my future, made life seem a greater thing. He was an entire stranger, and I did not see him again for thirteen years; and then I was preaching—a boy of twenty—in a Western city, and he came up at the close of the sermon, and, recalling the ride to me, gave me the pocket Bible he had with him, saying kind things about the hopes he had for my ministry. I never saw him again, and, as he has passed on to the future, shall not see him until I meet him in heaven. He was a bird of passage in my life, but he made my childhood sweeter, my youth of wider horizon, and my manhood stronger by that “cup of cold water” to a barefooted boy by the roadside.

Be careful of childhood. Bless it whenever you get a chance. It is a bird of passage; it “comes to pass,” and can never return.

Youth, with its days of seed-time; its period of greedy absorption, when ideas take root easily; its hours of optimism, when there are no impossibilities; its days of visions and dreams, when the sheaves in the field and the moon and the stars in the sky bow down and do obeisance before the young soul, is a bird of passage. It, too, comes to pass. It is the marvel of human growth. It is a miracle of God’s infinite love. Use it while you can. Run the plow deep while the soil is mellow, and while the chemistry of nature is all vital, quivering with desire to

bid Godspeed to new impulses and ideas. You may keep springtime over for a longer time by using it well. It stays long with those who fill its days with plowing and seeding. Some one says:

"I heard a farmer talk one day,
Telling his listeners how
In the wild, new country, far away,
The rainfall follows the plow;
'As fast as they break it up, you see,
And turn the heart to the sun,
As they open the furrows deep and free,
And the tillage is begun,

The earth grows mellow, and more and more
It holds, and sends to the sky
A moisture it never had before
When its face was hard and dry;
And so, wherever the plowshares run,
The clouds run overhead;
And the soil that works and lets in the sun
With water is always fed.'

I wonder if ever that farmer knew
The half of his simple word,
Or guessed the message that, heavenly true,
Within it was hidden and heard?
It fell on my ear by chance that day,
But the gladness lingers now,
To think it is always God's dear way
That 'the rainfall follows the plow.'"

Make much of your youth. Give it a fair chance. Make preparations in it for a great harvest; for it "comes to pass."

The working-days of manhood and womanhood are also birds of passage. It is only for a brief time that any man or woman is able to stand out in the broad

sunlight of God's day, full-orbed, matured, and yet with no touch of decay. It is a brief span in which one exults in the power to toil, conscious of the great reserve force of unused power which will honor all drafts of overwork. A few days or weeks or years, and the call of the doctor into consultation indicates that there is a breaking up already in the solid walls of middle life. Let us use well our strength and be wise in the noontide, for it "comes to pass."

Afternoon, and then comes the evening, in many respects the most beautiful season of human life. It is the time when the granary, the barn, the cellar, the storehouses, are full of gathered treasures. All the other seasons have contributed to its wealth—wisdom born of experience, tenderness, sympathy, large-heartedness, developed by all the experiences of life and death. Births, weddings, funerals, have all contributed to make tender and to hallow the mind and heart of a good man or a good woman who is passing through the afternoon of life and getting on toward the sunset. Use old age well. Do n't fret in it; do n't worry in it; look on the bright side of it; bring out all its treasures, and spread them on the board. Let the young rejoice in the juicy apples treasured up from the orchards gathered in your life's autumn. Let there be no miserliness; let old age be open-handed and full of rich, good cheer; make much of it; it "comes to pass."

There is another class of ideas well worth our consideration suggested by our theme. Do not allow your sorrows or your troubles to crush you under their weight; for they, too, "come to pass." Many of them pass very soon. Perhaps three-fourths of the

things that annoy us and fret us, if we will only restrain ourselves from saying or doing foolish things under their nagging spur, will pass with the very day in which they are born, and not even their ghosts ever appear again to trouble us. There are many little troublesome happenings that will die of their own accord in a moment if we do not give them longer life by incarnating them into words or conduct. Other sorrows and trials, more permanent in their seriousness, are still temporary, and will pass. Suppose your trouble is born of ill-health. Circumstances will change—you will either get better or worse. In one event, your health will be regained, and all the trials of sickness will disappear. In the other, you will escape all earth's frailties, and entirely recover from the weakness of the flesh. Sickness comes to pass. Many of the afflictions of the mind, the depressions of the spirit, all those worries and anxieties and gloomy experiences that we call the "blues," come to pass. Many of them would pass at once if we were well; for they are often born of the distempers of the body.

Perhaps your trials come from poverty, which is often very narrowing in its influence. But it will pass. The streets are paved with gold in heaven, where they make city gates out of precious jewels. Men who were so poor that their sores were licked by dogs on earth dwell in mansions up there. Poverty comes to pass.

Sorrow may come from a still tenderer source—misunderstandings between friends or the unkindness of those who have power over us—but all that comes to pass.

I have been interested to notice in the conversation or in the history of distinguished men and women who have gained great success in life, that the things which they recall with the most interest, and which they often credit as having the most beneficial influence over their lives, were the times when they were overworked or under-fed or ill-treated or lonely and unappreciated. All such times "came to pass;" and after they were gone they became interesting and often beautiful. When the storm goes by with its gray, cold drizzle, and the sun shines on it in its retreat, the rainbow covers it with splendor and glory. So there are many of you, shivering in the gray mists of sorrow and trial to-day, who will look back on these same experiences next week or next year, and see them glorified by the rainbow, and be astonished that they ever seemed so hard to endure.

We should also learn not to be proud or too elated or arrogant at the mere worldly successes of life; for they, too, come to pass. Riches are very uncertain. I have known many wealthy men to become very poor, and move from the mansion to the cottage. It is a proverb that the grandchildren, and often the children, of the wealthy of one generation are the hewers of wood and drawers of water in the next. Fortune has wings, and knows how to fly, and riches often fly away. Neither is anything more evanescent than the fame and honor that so many struggle after. The crowds that can applaud know also how to hiss, and brief indeed is often the space between. Popular success comes to pass.

Now, I have not said all these things to make you

sad, or to pitch our sermon in a minor key. Life does not so appear to me. But it is only by taking into account the things that are passing and transient that we can appreciate those things that endure. There are some things that last. Paul says there are three things that abide the shock of worlds: faith, hope, and love. And this declaration of Paul concerning this trinity of graces is only another declaration of his faith in God. While God lasts, men must have confidence; they will not lose their hope, and love shall triumph. It can not be wise for us to do anything or accept any path of life that robs us of communion and fellowship with God; for he does not come to pass.

Jenny Lind, whom the world came to call the Swedish Nightingale, suddenly left the stage in the height of her glory as a singer, when she was singing her best, and when all lands were wild to hear her, and never went back to it. There can be no doubt she missed the money, the fame, and the applause of great concourses of people; but she lived in peace and content in privacy. Once an English friend found her sitting, with a Bible on her knee, looking out across the ocean into the glory of the sunset. They talked, and the conversation drew them near to the inevitable question, "How is it that you ever came to abandon the stage at the very height of your success?"

"When, every day," was the quiet answer, "it made me think less of this [laying a finger on the Bible], and nothing at all of that [pointing to the sunset], what else could I do?"

The Bible and sunset! These were things that

would not pass; these were things she longed at all cost to preserve. She felt that, in losing her spiritual tone, she was losing them. May God give us the same wisdom, that we shall not give up the songsters that may sing to us forever for those that are only birds of passage!

Let us hold fast to God. He knows the things that are transient and the things that are eternal. He is never taken by surprise by any of the snarls in the tangled skein of our lives. He knows how to unravel them. The promise is, "All things work together for good to them that love God." God is not dismayed at the outlook, however it may have alarmed you. He is merciful to us in our timidity.

"He only knows how little I can see,
In this dim light, of his great plan for me
And for his world; how phantoms black and grim
Brandish their awful arms 'twixt me and him
Till I seem forced to doubt his love and power,
While in the darkness fearfully I cower;
He only knows how real they are to me,
How far he seems when I cry pleadingly;
Yet he is undismayed.

For he knows, too, that this thick cloud of doubt
That stifles, blinds me as I grope about,
Is but the shifting, wind-blown surface sand,
'Neath which the ground is firm whereon I stand.
He knows that just ahead the palm trees grow,
With cool springs bubbling in their shade; and so,
Above the dust, the tumult, and the strife
Of myriad forces in this human life,
He watcheth undismayed."

XVIII

Spiritual Weather Wisdom

When it is evening, ye say, It will be fair weather: for the heaven is red. And in the morning, It will be foul weather to-day: for the heaven is red and lowering. Ye know how to discern the face of the heaven; but ye can not discern the signs of the times.—*Matthew xvi, 2, 3. (Rev. Ver.)*

THERE is a sky beyond the sky. There is an atmosphere through which the eye sees, the ear hears, and from which our lungs fill themselves. There is another atmosphere of the soul, illumined by an inner light, through which the eye of spiritual intelligence beholds worlds unknown to the physical vision; an atmosphere through which the pure in heart see God. God has made no man without the possibilities of the spiritual life. Christ is "the true Light, which lighteth every man that cometh into the world." The possibilities of spiritual vision, the sensitiveness of the inner ear, that can hear the whispers of "the still small voice" that spoke to Elijah in the mountain cave, and which he heeded, even when the thunder and the lightning and the hurricane had no message for his soul, are a part of our inheritance as the sons of God. We may have been made deaf by sin and blind by the smoky atmosphere of selfishness and iniquity; but He who unstopped the ears of the deaf, loosened the tongue of the dumb, and opened the eyes of blind Bartimeus, knows that underneath all the dwarfing

and maiming of sin there is in every one of us the divine possibility of enjoying the heavenly atmosphere of the spiritual life.

These people, whose question about a sign from heaven that should substantiate his right to be called the Messiah brought out the text, were not earnest seekers after truth, but mere curiosity-seekers. They followed after Christ as men follow a circus, to see the show. Like Herod (to whom Pilate sent Jesus for trial in his endeavor to escape responsibility himself), they were anxious to see Jesus because they hoped he would perform some miracle for their especial delectation and entertainment.

It is quite common now, if a great singer or performer or author reading from the works of his genius, comes into the country and attracts popular attention, for rich and fashionable people to secure a private performance for the special pleasure of themselves and a few choice friends. That was about the way these people thought concerning Christ. They belonged to the upper ten of their time and community. They were the ultra fashionable, and liked to be propitiated and flattered by every new claimant for popular leadership. They no doubt thought they were paying a great compliment to Jesus when they offered to sit in judgment on his merits, and invited him to a private dress rehearsal, when he should furnish signs from heaven showing that he was the Messiah. To us who look back from our vantage ground of over eighteen hundred years, with the beneficent shadow of the Christ looming up through the centuries, filling all history with his influence in education, in art,

in literature, in music, in government, until these Pharisees and Sadducees seem very insignificant and, compared with Jesus, shrunken and shriveled, like pigmies beside a giant, it is hard to appreciate the airs they gave themselves in their day. Christ seemed small, however, to them, while their own importance loomed up into giant-like proportions.

Christ uncovers the secret of the great blunder which they made. Intellectually and ethically, these were the most cultivated and wide-awake people of their time; but they had no spiritual vision. Yet they were very religious. They paid more attention to the mere secular side of religion, to the formal and ceremonious side, than anybody else in the land. But they knew nothing of that which is the real essence of all worship. They were a signal illustration of how one may be so given up to the form and ceremony of a great movement that the spirit is lost sight of. Judaism stood for God's Church among men. Its people were God's chosen people. These people understood that they were to represent God in the world as genuine Christians understand now that it is their duty and privilege to represent Jesus Christ to their fellow-men. There had been a long movement of the ages toward the coming of Jesus Christ as the Messiah, the Savior of the world. For thousands of years the Jewish prophets had been looking forward through the centuries, and again and again had foretold not only the advent of Jesus, but the conditions of the world at the time of his coming, the place of his birth, the family from which he should spring, the kind of person he should be, and the work he should

perform. But these people who were professedly looking for him had so engrossed themselves in the mere formalities and details of the sanctuary and the temple worship that they had lost out of their sight and thought him of whom the temple was only a prophecy and a forerunner. The priest still went into the holy of holies with the slain lamb or the bleeding doves, to offer his sacrifice of atonement before the altar; but he had become so immersed in the petty ceremonies of his profession that he had ceased to watch with eager eye and throbbing heart the coming of him who was himself to be the Atonement for the sins of the whole world.

As we take the prophecies of Isaiah, and of others of the prophetic group, to-day, and read them, it seems very strange that these people, who professed to be looking for Christ, should not have known him at first glance. They would have known him had they been giving as much attention to the spiritual side of their religion as they were to the outer and ceremonial.

With these thoughts in our minds, the text becomes very plain to us. Christ was saying to these men, in substance: "You people are very wise about outward matters. You have studied the clouds in the sky, and you know whether they mean a storm or a fair day. In a question of ritual or ceremony you would never be deceived. You know the husk well, but you know nothing about the kernel. You have taken care of the outside of the platter, but within, in the secret chambers of heart and soul life, you are unclean. You can tell whether it will rain to-morrow or not; you

know what it costs to make a sin-offering in the temple; you know what sort of a gown a priest ought to wear; but concerning the coming of the Messiah, an event which is to be the crowning glory of your race and the most important fact to any one of your lives, an event without which your temple and your priests, your prophecies, your sin-offerings, your very religion itself, is but the chatter of idiots—about this great, supreme spiritual event you are deaf and dumb and blind.”

I think, the more we reflect upon this strange case, the more we shall see that it has a lesson by no means foreign to us. These people had given way to a temptation which is common to man, and which works as sad disaster now as it did then. The temptation is as strong with us as it was with them to become enamored with the mere outside details of religious life, and fail to discern the grave spiritual realities of which these forms and ceremonies are only the husk, the shell. This is why people often say their prayers long after the spirit of worship has ceased to make the heart beat quickly or to exalt the spirit. Many a wicked man, whose life is profane and godless, over whom the commandment of Heaven's law has no binding force, mumbles his prayer at night, and may even join in the response on Sunday. The habit of worship is there, but the spirit is no longer discerned. Church music often falls into the same category. The words are sacred, taken from some old psalm or heartfelt acclamation of praise or trust uttered by holy souls that were aflame with adoration and exulting in communion with the Divine heart; but often

the people who sing, as well as the people who listen, discern only the outward. They are judges of technique, critics of the æsthetic in voice and rhythm and form and presentation; but the deep penitence in which a broken heart once wailed forth its sorrow, or the exulting and lofty flight of spiritual vision on which a pure heart mounted up with "wings as eagles," and, flying in the face of the Sun of righteousness, saw unspeakable glories in the heavens above, is not discerned. Worldly, intellectual critics listen to worldly, intellectual performers; and the soul of music, the throbbing, breaking heart of repentance, or the shining face of thanksgiving, is neither seen nor felt. The pulpit may furnish its illustration as well. Preaching is not delivering orations, or reading essays, or presenting dissertations of truth, however high or lofty, from the intellect to the intellect alone. Perhaps more preaching fails of its great mission because of that false conception than for any other cause. No man can really preach unless, with sublime humility (but with complete assurance), he has pulsating in every drop of his blood the consciousness which Christ expressed when he said: "The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he anointed me to preach good tidings to the poor: he hath sent me to proclaim release to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised, to proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord."

If we look honestly into our hearts, shall we not see reason for arousing ourselves to keener spiritual discernment. Each one of us is in constant danger

of losing out of our prayer, our song, our ministry, the spiritual meaning and purpose, even while we may be improving in that which is outward and formal. Religion is a poor thing without the holy glow and fervor which belong to it; but to the heart completely surrendered to his service, God never fails to impart the assurance of his presence and his love. Every one of us who will give ourselves to God may know the truth of William Cowper's song:

"Sometimes a light surprises
The Christian while he sings;
It is the Lord who rises
With healing on his wings;
When comforts are declining,
He grants the soul again
A season of clear shining,
To cheer it after rain.

In holy contemplation,
We secretly pursue
The theme of God's salvation,
And find it ever new:
Set free from present sorrow,
We cheerfully can say,
Let the unknown to-morrow
Bring with it what it may,

It can bring with it nothing
But He will bear us through;
Who gives the lilies clothing,
Will clothe his people too:
Beneath the spreading heavens
No creature but is fed;
And He who feeds the ravens
Will give his children bread.

Though vine nor fig-tree neither
Their wonted fruit should bear,
Though all the field shall wither,
Nor flocks nor herds be there,
Yet God the same abiding,
His praise shall tune my voice;
For while in him confiding,
I can not but rejoice."

I think there ought to be a special message for us in our work as Christians in seeking to perform the great mission of a Christian, which is to bear the good tidings of Christ's saving mercy to those who have not yet accepted him as a personal Savior. I fear that, both in the pulpit and in the pew, we are often so absorbed with the regular order of our Church services, preparing our sermons, looking after the finances, arranging for the outward and formal advancement of the Church—all of which is necessary and valuable in its way—that we lose sight of the fact that our chief mission is to persuade some sinner to forsake his sins and surrender to Jesus Christ. I have been searching my own heart and conscience, and I feel, therefore, the right to search yours, for any lack of clear spiritual discernment of our great mission as the friends and servants of Jesus Christ. While we seek to beautify the form, and present in our preaching and singing, and in all the adjuncts of worship, as great an attraction for the people as we can, God forbid that we should lose sight for a moment of the great purpose of the Church, in which, if it fail, it fails everywhere, the seeking after and the saving of the lost. Unless the Church is saving lost souls, the eloquence of the sermon the perfection of the music,

and the elegance or stateliness of the service, only add to the cruel mockery of the failure to do the work of a Church of Jesus Christ.

One of Mr. Andrew Lang's literary friends has recently told this little story concerning him:

The friend was spending a few days one summer in an English village. Having noticed a beautiful river, which seemed to promise excellent fishing, he spoke of it to his landlady.

"O yes, sir," she said; "there is very good fishing here. Many people come here for fishing."

"What kind of people come here?" he asked.

"Literary gentlemen come here very often, sir. We had Mr. Andrew Lang staying here."

"O, really! Does he fish? Is he a good fisherman?"

"Yes, sir; he fishes beautifully."

"Really! Does he catch much?"

"O no, sir; he never catches anything. But he fishes beautifully."

We may laugh at that when it is some man fishing for trout; but it is a pathetic and a tragic thing when it is a Christian minister and a Christian Church, composed of hundreds of men and women, who have taken upon them the name of Jesus Christ, and are posing before the world as gospel fishermen, and yet go on month after month, and are seemingly satisfied if they hold their own and have a pleasant time, and are ready to congratulate themselves that things look as well this year as last. We become fascinated with the formal procession of our religious life, and forget the multitudes of immortal souls that are struggling

in darkness, whom it is our privilege to bring to the Light of the world. How few of us discern the great opportunities of these days of Christian service!

Mr. Moody tells of a man who was so discouraged with life that, like Elijah, when he was under the juniper-tree, he wished he might die and be at rest. He fell asleep in that mood, and dreamed that his wish was granted. He was ushered into heaven, and was there in the glory-world, so delighted that he had at last reached heaven. But soon one came, and said, "Come, I want to show you something." And he took him to the battlements of heaven, and said, "Look down yonder. What do you see?"

"I see a very dark world."

"Look and see if you know it."

"Why, yes," he said; "that is the world I have come from."

"What do you see?"

"Why, men are blindfolded there; many of them are going over a precipice."

"Well, will you stay here and enjoy heaven, or will you go back to that dark world and spend a little longer time, and tell those people about this bright world?"

The discouraged Christian awoke from his slumber, and, after years of victorious service, says, "I have never wished myself dead since."

It is for you and me so to live the Christ-life and so reveal the spirit of his love in our conduct that our acquaintances can not doubt him. Dr. Theodore L. Cuyler has a favorite expression, that what our generation needs is not arguments for Chris-

tianity in books, but arguments for Christianity in boots. Christ incarnate in your life and mine is the mightiest Christian evidence.

“From creed and scheme the light dies out
The saintly fact survives;
The blessed Master none can doubt,
Revealed in humble human lives.”

To live such a life is to be victorious and triumphant. Dr. John Watson says he once saw two pictures in the Salon in Paris. One picture represented a man, a king, lying on his death-bed. He was just dead; his face had the appearance of life, and his servants, who a moment before would have flown at his word, were engaged in rifling his caskets and his wardrobe. The legend beneath was: “William the Conqueror.” What a barren victory! Just a moment dead, and his own servants were robbing him! The other was the picture of Christ lying in a rocky tomb, also dead, but the angels were keeping watch; and to that tomb, now empty, all ages and all generations are coming to carry away priceless treasures in their hands. Christ was the great conqueror, and his conquest is possible to every man and woman who yield their hearts to him and live in his spirit.

XIX

Syndicating Our Joys

Blessed be God, even the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies, and the God of all comfort; who comforteth us in all our tribulation, that we may be able to comfort them which are in any trouble, by the comfort wherewith we ourselves are comforted of God.—2 *Cor. i, 3, 4.*

A VERY striking article recently appeared in the *Saturday Evening Post*, of Philadelphia, under the title of "Syndicating our Sorrows." In this article the editor sets forth with great clearness that the most selfish man in the world is the one who is the most unselfish with his sorrows, who makes you suffer all his misery as well as your own. The world becomes to him a syndicate formed to take stock in his private worries and troubles. Such a man, if you ask him how he is feeling, will trace the whole genealogy of his present condition down from the time he had the grippe, four years ago. He is syndicating his sorrows.

The writer of the article referred to is of the opinion that the business man who lets his dyspepsia get into his disposition, and who makes every one around him suffer because he himself is ill, is syndicating ill-health. Now we have no right to make others the victims of our moods. If illness makes us cross and irritable, makes us unjust to faithful workers who can not protest, we ought to quarantine ourselves so that we do not spread the contagion. We should force

ourselves to speak slowly, to keep anger away from the eyes, to prevent temper from showing in the voice. If we feel that we must be blue and miserable, we ought to keep it out of our heads, and not let it get north of the neck.

Reflecting on this very earnest and helpful editorial sermon on "Syndicating our Sorrows," I was impressed with the fact that while the writer of it was right in his position, there was another side to the question that might be treated with equal helpfulness, and that is the use we make of our joys. While we ought to refrain from syndicating our sorrows, it is surely our duty to syndicate our joys, and let the whole world take stock in our happiness. Ella Wheeler Wilcox sings truly:

"There is an unseen cord which binds
The whole wide world together;
Through every human life it winds,
This one mysterious tether.
It links all races and all lands
Throughout their span allotted;
And death alone unties the strands
Which God himself has knotted.

However humble be your lot,
Howe'er your hands are fettered,
You can not think a noble thought
But all the world is bettered.
With every impulse, deed, or word
Wherein love blends with duty,
A message speeds along the cord
That gives the earth more beauty.

Your unkind thought, your selfish deed,
Is felt in farthest places;
There are no solitudes where greed
And wrong can hide their faces.

There are no separate lives; the chain,
Too subtle for our seeing,
Unites us all upon the plane
Of universal being."

The text which I have chosen seems to me to teach our theme with singular clearness. Paul teaches that while all comfort comes to us from God, it comes to our hearts very frequently, and indeed most usually, by way of being ground in the great mill of human experience, and it is our privilege in turn to pass it on to nourish and comfort others after it has strengthened us.

Some people seem to have the same idea of comfort and of God's gift of blessings in general that a certain society woman of the city had of flour. A distinguished literary man has been trying his hand at farming, and tells the story of a fashionable society woman who visited his estate, and was escorted by her host to a field where they were drilling wheat. He showed her some of the grain, and, as she did not seem to recognize it, explained to her that it was the origin of the ordinary bread-loaf. "What!" she exclaimed incredulously, "do you mean to tell me that bread is made out of those little hard things? I always thought that it came from that fine white stuff which grows in flowers!"

So there are many that seem to feel that they can just go to God and ask for the comfort they need, and have it given to them all bottled up, like patent medicine, warranted to cure all the ills that flesh is heir to. But that is not God's plan. He proposes that we shall store up comfort by the way, and that we

shall use our stock as a reservoir to draw from in blessing others, even as we are constantly receiving blessings and comfort from those who have first received from him. The instinct of the squirrel or the jaybird, that causes them to lay by their store of nuts and grain, and the wise forethought of the man who does not spend all he earns, but seeks to get a roof of his own over his head and an account at the bank for a rainy day, and that runs out the roots of acquaintance and fellowship among the people in the community where he lives—all this is a part of God's great plan, which he illustrates in nature in a thousand ways, showing us that it is our duty to hedge ourselves about, not in a greedy, mean way, but in a wise, prudent way, with comforts to be drawn upon in emergency.

A farmer in South Australia was a great lover of beauty. The climate was hot, and in the heat of the season, when everything was burned by the sun, the shimmer of the landscape became painful to the eye, and this man, having an eye to the comfort and good cheer of his family, sowed a patch of lucern, which is of a very refreshing green, for some distance about his house and buildings on every side, so that in the most barren season the eye would be refreshed with the green sight. It happened that summer that a great fire was kindled through some carelessness on one of the ranches, and came sweeping over the country in billows of flame, carrying a widespread devastation in its path. The fire swept on until our farmer heard in the distance the thunderous rush of the flames, and thought that his homestead was doomed. It came

on so rapidly that he was compelled to let his wife and children down into the well, where they could stand up in the shallow water, and thrust their heads under when the heat was too intense. When they were there, safe for the moment, he shouted down to them, "Good-bye, my darlings! May God protect you! I will go and try what I can do to beat back the fire." Poor fellow, he did not dare believe he would ever see them again. But to his great joy he noticed that while the fire had swept over his wheat-fields and blackened them in a few moments, it stopped at the edge of green; it was too damp to burn. And the fire swept on around, and left all his buildings safe. He ran back to the well, and helped out the wife and children. He clasped them in his arms, and his utterance was choked, but it was a word they all understood, "Saved! Saved! The lucern kept back the fire. God be thanked that ever I planted that bit of lucern!"

There ought to be a message in this for us. We should store up happiness for future use. Every good book read; every temptation to evil resisted; every gracious plan for helping humanity thought out; every promise of God treasured up in the soul, as well as the home, and money, and creature comforts of life, are so much of possible store to be drawn upon in times of emergency.

According to Paul's idea, we shall not be able to deal rightly with the blessings and comforts of life unless we recognize that they come to us from God. If a man thinks he has earned all his own blessings himself, that he owes nothing except to his own

strength, or his own shrewdness and cunning, then he will feel that he can deal narrowly and selfishly with what he has, and his blessings will often be, instead of a help, a curse to him. A fisherman, while seining, caught a catfish that was literally starving with food in his mouth. He had attempted to swallow a smaller catfish, but its fins had caught in its mouth and pierced through on both sides. Many a man has been affected that way by his blessings. Have you never seen a man with wealth he could n't digest? There is no more pitiable sight. Many people have received great gifts from God, but they they have refused to see God in them, and the blessings have turned to curses. How much easier it is for us to see God in our miseries than in our blessings! How common to hear a man say, "I do n't know what I have done that God should so afflict me." But how much nobler and sweeter it is to say, as Elizabeth Barrett said in one of her letters to Robert Browning, "I do not know what I have ever done that God should bestow upon me such great blessings."

A consciousness of God's hand in our blessings and comforts will have upon us two effects which at first glance seem antagonistic, but are really in perfect harmony. One effect is to make us humble. Who am I that God should be so good to me? Who am I, and what have I ever done, that the infinite God should bestow upon me this rare and beautiful gift? It is this humility of spirit that makes it possible for God to bestow still richer gifts upon us. There is an old beggar who solicits alms near the St. Juan Road, along which Queen Victoria sometimes drives. He is a

queer old beggar, seated in a ramshackle wooden chariot drawn by two great dogs. This old beggar always races the queen's carriage when it comes along. As soon as he sees her majesty coming, he rouses his dogs and waits. Immediately the two equippages, in such strange contrast, are level, the old man shouts to his team, and away they go at a mad pace down the hill, scaring the passers-by and raising clouds of dust. The queen instructs her driver always to let the dogs win, and then the old beggar receives his allowance. It is his weakness, his humility, that wins for him. If one of the nobility should race with the queen it would end with no such result. So we make headway before the mercy-seat, not by our pride, but by our humility. The most swift-winged angels that fly in God's train can not outrun the humblest soul that smites upon his breast and says, "God be merciful to me, a sinner." If we receive our blessings as a conscious mercy from God, we are humbled, but at the same time enriched.

The other effect is that when we are conscious that God has out of his great love comforted us and blessed us with some rich and wonderful joy, we are conscious at the same time of a new sense of dignity and honor. There is a kind of holy pride in being chosen as the child of God to receive this great honor. God gives dignity to his humblest children. Humility is always united with the noblest dignity. A gentleman tells how he was staying at the house of a family who had a child that had fallen out of a swing when it was four years old. It was a very curious case. The little creature was then twenty-three years of

age, and yet his arms and legs and hands and feet were those of a child four years old, though the body had developed into manhood. One day the afflicted little creature looked up into his mother's face, and said: "Ah, mother! I shall not trouble you much longer!" "Trouble, darling, trouble! You are the light of our home! You are the joy of our household! Trouble! We are learning lessons of trust and faith and patience from you every day, my sweet one. When God takes you from us, it will be a dark day for our home." "Yes," he said, "yes, mother; but I am so tired; and when I die I shall go to heaven. Jesus said, 'Suffer little children to come unto me,' and he meant crippled children, too, mother; and when I stand up with the angels I shall stand up straight!" How many of God's crippled children, who have been marred and impoverished and lamed by the cruel sorrows and misfortunes of life, by the unkindness and the bitterness of oppression from without, God has made, even in this world, through some sweet comfort of his love, some gift of Divine consolation, to stand up straight in the sunlight with a new sense of honor and dignity!

But the great theme we have left almost untouched as yet; and that is, that we miss the greatest reason of our comfort and the sweetest joy of it unless we hold it in trusteeship for others, and take all the world into a syndicate with us, to be happier because we are glad; to make other faces joyous because our tears have ceased to fall; to strengthen other feeble knees because ours stand strong; or, to use Paul's words, better than any that I can coin, "that we may

be able to comfort them which are in any trouble, by the comfort wherewith we ourselves are comforted of God." A man may be selfish and ungenerous if he thinks he has made all his blessings himself; but if they have come to him from the hand of the good God, who is Father over all, he feels charitably toward any who have passed through the same trials and sufferings as himself, and he feels like being generous and open-hearted to them. If shelter has come to his own head, as a pure mercy of God, he feels like stretching the covering wide enough to take in others who are threatened with the storm.

Spurgeon once said that when he was a boy he was leaving his aunt's house after a visit, when, finding it beginning to rain, he caught up an umbrella that was snugly placed in a corner and was proceeding to open it, when the old lady, who for the first time observed his movement, sprang towards him, exclaiming: "No, no; that you never shall! I have had that umbrella twenty-three years, and it has never been wet yet; and I am sure it shall not be wetted now." Mr. Spurgeon used to say that some folks' religion was of the same quality—none the worse for wear. They look at it as a respectable article, to be taken out and aired on Sunday morning, but not to be dampened in the showers of daily life. They look upon their blessings and comforts as something to be hoarded and kept dry, as the old lady kept the twenty-three-year-old gingham umbrella. But God does not give us our blessings to be used that way. We are to syndicate them for the benefit of all his children whom we can reach.

On Christmas evening, 1837, an old man with a stout stick walked slowly through the most fashionable quarter of Paris. His right arm pressed to his side an oblong object wrapped in a checkered cotton handkerchief. He was thinly clad, shivering, and emaciated. He was buffeted about by the crowds, and seemed at a loss which way to turn. He untied the handkerchief, and disclosed a violin and bow. He tried to play, but the result was only harsh and in-harmonious sounds. He sank down with a sob on the steps, resting the instrument on his knees. "My God," he cried, "I can no longer play!"

Three young men just then came down the street, singing a popular tune. One of them accidentally knocked off the old man's hat, and a second stumbled against his leg. The bareheaded old violinist rose proudly to his feet.

"Pardon, monsieur," said the third man. "I hope we did not hurt you." He picked up the old man's hat as he spoke.

"No," was the bitter answer. The young man saw the violin.

"You are a musician?"

"I was one." Two great tears trickled down the old man's cheek.

"What is the matter? Are you ill?" The old man faltered a moment; then he held out his hat to them.

"Give me a trifle for the love of God. I can no longer earn anything by my art; my fingers are stiff and my daughter is dying of consumption and want."

Down in his pockets went each one of the trio. They were but poor students, and the result was only

sixteen sous. This was the combined capital of the two. The third only had a cake of resin.

"This won't do," declared the one who had apologized for the accident. "We want more than that to relieve our fellow-artist. A pull together will do it. You, Adolphe, take the violin and accompany Gustave, while I go round with the hat."

They pulled their hats over their faces and turned up their coat-collars in order to avoid recognition. Adolphe took the violin from the old man's trembling hand; Gustave straightened out his shoulders; in another moment the first notes of the "Carnival de Venice" were floating out upon the night air. Such masterful music did not customarily come from the instruments of street-players.

Windows of the palatial houses flew up, and heads were thrust out of the opening; strollers coming down the street stopped, and those who had gone on retraced their steps. Soon a good-sized crowd had gathered, and the music charmed and fascinated them all. Life came back to the old broken-hearted man, he grasped his stick, and using it as a baton, seemed to preside over the entertainment, while his face lighted up and his eye glistened. It was Christmas night, and the pathos of the scene took hold upon the hearts of the people. The proceeds of the entertainment netted five hundred francs. Many of the wealthy listeners had thrown gold-pieces into the old battered hat.

Then they gave him back his hat and its contents, and wrapped up his instrument in the old checkered handkerchief.

"Your names, your names," the old man gasped. "Give me your names, that I may bless you on my death-bed."

"My name is Faith," said the first.

"And mine is Hope," said the second.

"And mine is Charity," said the treasurer of the enterprise.

"You do not even know mine," continued the old man, regaining his voice. "Ah, I might have been an impostor, but I am not. My name is Chapuce. For ten years I directed the orchestra at Strasburg. It was I who led in 'Guillaume Tell.' Since I left my native Alsace, misfortune has followed me. With this money my daughter and I can go to the country, and there she will recover her health. You—all of you—will be truly great."

"Amen!" responded the young men, fervently.

Despite their attempt at disguising, the young men had been recognized by one who afterwards told the tale. They were known to fame in later years as Gustave Roger, the great tenor; Adolphe Herman, the great violinist; and Charles Gounod, the great composer. So the old man's prophecy was fulfilled.

I have recalled the story, not for its beauty only, but to impress on all our hearts that many a bruised and broken life, that seems no longer to have the power to make music or win friends, was once full of music and fellowship. If we could only feel this, many a discouraged man or woman whom we pass by formally would catch something of the inspiration of our joy, and take heart again under the comfort we would gladly communicate to them. We shall not lose our

joys by syndicating them; they will be multiplied, and come back to us in unexpected ways.

"A child's kiss
Set on thy sighing lips,
Shall make thee glad.

A poor man served
By thee shall make
Thee rich.

A sick man helped
By thee shall make
Thee strong.

Thou shalt be served
Thyself by every sense
Of service which
Thou renderest."

XX

Jesus Christ as an Orator

Never man spake like this man.—*John vii, 46.*

THIS is the pith of one of the most interesting stories in the whole life of Jesus. The high priests had come to the conclusion that they must silence Jesus or they themselves would soon be overthrown. The very Sanhedrin itself would soon go down before an agitation led by a man of such purity of character, such eloquence of word and spirit, and such fascination and charm of manner that the multitudes were carried away by his addresses. Acting on this conclusion, they sent a force of police officers to arrest Jesus. But the officers waited too long before acting. If they had gone straight up to him while he was silent, possibly they might have been able to accomplish their purpose. But, no doubt, they were curious to know for themselves something about him, and so waited to hear him speak. As they listened, he gained over them such a strange influence that they were not able to face him. It was not that he was full of denunciation or terror in his preaching; his words were tender and loving; but there was about his manner and his theme and spirit so much of the Divine influence that a strange fear came over these ignorant officers, and they would not touch him.

We are told in Roman history that in the troublous

times that closed the great Republic, among the men that arose and made themselves masters of the world there was hardly a greater than Caius Marius. The conqueror of Jugurtha, the conqueror of Cimbri, he was looked upon as the shield and sword of Rome. Six times he sought, and six times he obtained the consulship, and bade fair to die as he had lived, the ruthless lord of the Eternal City. A strong rival appeared upon the scene, however, and, after checkered fortunes, Marius had to fly. In the romance of his wanderings we are told that he was once put on shore, unattended and unarmed. He was seized and flung into prison, and an edict came from Rome that he must die. A Gaulish slave was sent to the dungeon to do the deed. Marius, sitting in a gloomy corner of the prison, with his bloodshot eyes glared on the man, and with his terrible voice demanded, "Canst thou kill Caius Marius?" And the slave, fearing the prisoner more than the jailer or the judge, flung down his sword and fled away, crying, "I can not kill Caius Marius." It was by no such art as this that Jesus awed the officers that were sent against him, and yet it was equally effective. The shield that protected Caius Marius was terrific rage, while that which turned the sword from Christ was the mercy and love that clothed him as a garment or that surrounded him as an atmosphere.

And so, without undertaking to take the prisoner they had been sent for, the officers came back to the chief priests empty-handed. As they came up, the chief priests inquired, "Why have ye not brought him?" And the officers answered, "Never man spake

like this man." Then the Pharisees, sneering in their faces, said, "Are ye also deceived?" Nicodemus put in a mild defense of Jesus, and they turned on him, and wanted to know if he was also a Galilean. And then every man of the crowd turned about and went home.

It is surely worth our while to study, from its human side, some of the characteristics of the oratory of Jesus which gave him such marvelous power over the people.

In the first place, Christ talked on great themes. He spoke to men of the great questions that belonged to all times and all ages. He talked of God, and of man. He talked to men of God as a Father, and thus brought him out of the clouds and made him real to them. Even childhood can nestle into the arms of the Heavenly Father, to whom Jesus Christ has introduced us.

A little girl twelve years old was testifying for Christ, and her pastor said, "Well, Nellie, how do you know that you are a Christian?"

And she said, ever so sweetly, "Well, sir, you know how you feel when you have not been friends with anybody and you have made it up, don't you?"

"Yes."

"That is just how I feel; as if I and God had not been friends, and now it was all made up."

And the wise old man who has spent his life in business affairs, and who knows the world, has the same tender feeling of trust and confidence in the God whom we see in Jesus Christ.

Mr. Walker, the great English ship-canal builder, a little before his death, on being asked by a friend

if he was afraid to die, answered: "I am not afraid to die, because I enjoy the friendship of Christ, and my comfort is this, that the Christ who will meet me on the other side is the Christ I know here."

Christ talked to men about themselves. What glorious meaning he put into that word "neighbor!" A traveling man, a member of this Church, told me the other day that the Good Samaritan was a drummer, and he made out a very good case for it. He reasoned that in those days, when people did not travel very much, a drummer was about the only man who would have credit at the hotels so that he could leave his new friend who had fallen among thieves, and say to the landlord with all confidence: "Here, you take care of this man, just the same as if it were me. I have n't much money with me, but when I come on my next round I'll square up the account whatever it is." Whatever the Good Samaritan's business was, he incarnated the idea of Jesus Christ as to the duty of one man to another one whom he finds in trouble.

Christ spoke directly to men's consciences concerning their duties to one another and to God, and assured them that the present life was critical in its influence on the life to come. He taught that if men are to hope for heaven, they must catch the step of the heavenly music in this world, and that hell begins here in a conscience hardened against God. These great themes gave Christ power over the people who listened to him.

Sometimes a discourse has a great theme, yet the style and manner of address are such as to cover up rather than bring out the theme in bold relief. But

Jesus Christ spoke in pictures. Abraham Lincoln was not more full of stories than Jesus of Nazareth. His illustrations—and you could almost say that his sermons were all illustrations—were taken from the lilies, and the plowed ground, and the sower, and the ravens, and the sparrows, and the boats, and the fishing-nets, and the wedding feasts, and the funerals of the people. His stories dealt with common life; things that people were accustomed to, and knew about; and so he held the attention, and got a hold on the conscience until these poor policemen coming up on the outside of the crowd found themselves hanging forward, with their mouths wide open, to listen.

But I imagine the spirit of Christ's teaching, as much as anything else, captured the imagination of his listeners. First, a spirit of sympathy was manifested in everything he said or did. Was it his conversation with a leper? There was something about his look and the brotherhood of his attitude and speech and touch by which the man was healed that was clothed with sympathy. Sympathy is a wonderful power. This sympathy made Christ tender with people. Though he was dealing with people who were disgraced, and whom the multitude were ready to stone to death, Jesus dealt with them as tenderly as a mother deals with a little babe. If we want to win people and charm them away from their sins, we must catch the same spirit.

"Think gently of the erring one:

Ye know not of the power

With which temptation came on him

In some unguarded hour.

Ye can not know how earnestly
He struggled, or how well,
Until the time of weakness came,
When sadly thus he fell.

Speak gently to the erring one:
For is it not enough
That innocence and peace have gone
Without thy censure rough?
It sure must be a weary load,
That sin-crushed heart to bear,
And they who share a happier lot
Their chidings well may spare.

Think gently of the erring one:
O, do not thou forget,
However darkly stained with sin,
He is thy brother yet.
Born of the self-same sinful clay,
Loved by the self-same God,
He hath but stumbled on the road
Thou hast in weakness trod.

Speak gently to the erring one:
And thou mayst bring him back,
With holy words and tones of love,
From misery's thorny track.
Forget not thou hast often sinned,
And tempted yet mayst be;
Deal gently with the erring one,
As God hath dealt with thee."

Another characteristic of the spirit of Jesus, in his addresses to the people, was a mingling of earnestness with joyous hope for the triumph of goodness. Christ not only loved men, but he believed with all his soul that it was possible to save them. There is something supremely beautiful in the statement, that

it was for the joy that was set before him that he endured the cross and despised the shame, and came, at last, to his throne at the right hand of God. And this holy joy and hope made Christ irresistible when he talked upon these great themes of God and man, of heaven and hell, in his pictorial and loving way.

I would to God we might learn his art; and we may. If we will come close to him, entering into fellowship with his Spirit, we shall, in our conversations with our fellow-men and in all our dealings with them, be given something of the influence of the eloquence of Jesus.

Love, guided by such faith and hope in a holy cause, is irresistible. What marvels Jesus wrought with it! "The Magdalene wetted his feet with her tears and wiped them with the hairs of her head. Children adored him; the Levitical choir-boys shouted rapturous hosannas when he came. Zaccheus, at one word of gentleness from him, repairs the wrongs of a lifetime. Shouting multitudes strewed his path with garments and with palms. Pilate, the haughty and cruel Roman, is touched by his pale nobleness into awe and pity. He broke the heart of Peter into penitence by a single look. The dying robber, who saw him only in his hour of shame, is melted to adoration by the pathos of his humiliated glory. St. Stephen, under the heaped stones in anguish lying, catches but one glimpse of him in vision, and radiance illuminates his angel countenance. St. Paul, at one glance of him, flings away the shame of a false Pharisaism and the furies of a persecuting bigotry."

And, thank God, this wonderful influence of Jesus

did not cease with his passing away from the earth. He has been able to communicate the same sympathy and tenderness, the same fire of love, the same unquenchable hope and undying faith to all hearts which have yielded to his sway. As Canon Farrar has so brilliantly said, it shines through the scholastic subtleties of Thomas Aquinas; it throbs in the mighty thunderings of Savonarola; it glows over the soft, silent pictures of Fra Angelico! It rings through all our best hymns, whether written by Romanists, like Faber, or Presbyterians like Watts, or Methodists like Charles Wesley. That supreme love and hope and confidence of Jesus visited the prisons with John Howard; it sought out the lost, abandoned women with Elizabeth Fry; it taught the ragged children with Robert Raikes; it broke the fetters of the slave with Clarkson and Wilberforce and Wendell Phillips; it burned in the heart of David Livingstone in Africa; it toiled for temperance with Father Mathew in Ireland; it went to die among the lepers with Father Damien in Hawaii.

This spirit has not died out of the world. Christ still has the power to take hold upon these human hearts of ours and charge them with that heavenly electricity which made his own words and deeds so divinely eloquent. If we have his spirit, and devote ourselves to the great purposes which fired him, then our lives shall be clothed upon from heaven with power for good.

XXI

The Open Secret of Goodness

He hath shewed thee, O man, what is good; and what doth the Lord require of thee, but to do justly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God?—*Micah vi, 8.*

IN the great quartz-mills of the Northwestern mountains it does not matter how many tons of rock and quartz go beneath the ponderous crushers; the only thing that counts is the number of ounces of gold and silver that are treasured up. Life is like a great quartz-mill; a thousand things go into the hopper that do not count; it is the residuum of goodness saved up in character that is of importance.

When Sir Walter Scott lay dying, he looked up into the face of his friend, and said: "My dear, be good; nothing else counts when you come to lie here." Some day the shadows will be lengthening into the twilight past the sunset of our own last day on earth. Some day our arms will be outreached to encircle some dear one in a final clinging embrace. Our eyes will look up to catch the last loving message—wordless, because the heart is breaking. Some day that strong, courageous heart that has served us well, keeping sleepless watch night and day through all these years, will grow weary with its beating, and flutter and be still. Some day lips that have always been ready with answers of love will stiffen into silence under the parting kiss. Our arms will be folded over the quiet heart.

Those who love us best will kiss down the lids over our sightless eyes. "The spirit will return to God who gave it." Brother, sister, when that hour comes—and it is coming rapidly on the wings of the years—only goodness will count.

According to the passage we are studying, there are three great, simple, characteristic elements in a good life: "to do justly," "to love mercy," and "to walk humbly with thy God."

The first of these is justice. God's appeal is for genuine, straightforward, real people. A young man was overheard praying, and greatly impressed the one that heard him by repeating over and over again, this sentence: "O God, make me real! O God, make me real!" There is a tremendous demand for that kind of Christianity in our time. Political life, business life, and social life as well, are honeycombed with lies and hypocrisies and shams that sicken the heart. There can be no greater need than for Christian men and women who are real to the core. An unpleasant feature of English commercial life, by which the enemies of England have always been able to arm themselves from her factories, was once vigorously characterized by Mr. Gladstone in a conversation with a friend. Speaking of a possible invasion of England by its enemies, his friend remarked: "I suppose that some English companies might be induced to supply them with ships and arms." To which Gladstone replied: "O, yes. For filthy lucre they would supply arms to the rebel angels against heaven."

A thoroughly just and genuine man is always refreshing and comforting in whatever setting we find

him. An interesting story is told of how the notorious Spanish general, Weyler, after plundering the Philippines, of which he was governor, of a large fortune, was succeeded by General Despujol, who was an honest and just man. He had no sooner taken his seat in the governor's office than he was visited by one of the richest Chinese merchants of Manila. Behind the Chinese came servants bringing bags which contained ten thousand dollars in silver coin. This trifle the merchant begged the new governor to accept as a slight token of his consideration. He was mightily astonished when the new official promptly knocked him down. What a man that general would have been to be mayor in one of our modern municipalities, to deal with the liquor-sellers and the gamblers who outrage justice, and the jobbers that plunder the public till!

There is something wrong with our spiritual perception when we do not

“Honor the man who brooks no evil art,
No sham, no counterfeit; whose soul is pure
Within as fair without; who humbly stands
Before the searching gaze of earth and heaven
For what he is; . . .

. . . who calm can face
The awful front of death, but will not break
His plighted troth with truth; ay, honor him,
And thus ennoble thine own struggling soul.”

Edward Everett Hale relates a story of a New York newspaper office in connection with the assassination of President Lincoln. In the midst of the anxious hours following the receipt of the terrible news from

Washington, Mr. Gay, the acting editor of the New York *Tribune*, was confronted with the foreman of the typesetting room. He brought with him the proof of Mr. Greeley's leading article, as he had left it before leaving the city for the day. It was a brutal, bitter, sarcastic, personal attack on President Lincoln—the man who, when Gay read the article, was dying in Washington.

Gay read the article, and asked the foreman if he had any private place where he could lock up the type, to which no one but himself had access. The foreman said he had. Gay bade him tie up the type, lock the galley with this article in his cupboard, and tell no one what he had told him. Of course no such article appeared in the *Tribune* next morning.

But when Gay arrived on the next day at the office, he was met with the news that "the old man" wanted him, and the intimation that "the old man" was very angry. Gay waited upon Mr. Greeley.

"Are you there, Gay? I have been looking for you. They tell me that you ordered my leader out of this morning's paper. Is it your paper or mine? I should like to know if I can not print what I choose in my own newspaper?" This in great rage.

"The paper is yours, Mr. Greeley. The article is in type upstairs, and you can use it when you choose. Only this, Mr. Greeley. I know New York, and I hope and believe before God that there is so much virtue in New York that, if I had let that article go into this morning's paper, there would not be one brick upon another in the *Tribune* office now. Certainly I should be sorry if there were."

Mr. Greeley was cowed. He said not a word, nor ever alluded to the subject again. He had faced a real man.

If we are thoroughly just and real, we never have any fears as to whether God will help us in whatever we have on hand to do. Dr. Lyman Abbott recalls a familiar story told of Abraham Lincoln's response to a member of a visiting clerical delegation, who said to him, "I hope, Mr. President, that God is on our side;" to which the President replied, "I have not concerned myself with that question," adding, after the shock of surprise had been well effected, "but I have been very solicitous that we should be on God's side."

If we are just and true, and are fighting for genuine righteousness, we may know that we are on God's side, and may stand as firmly and as well-armored and sustained as was Abraham Lincoln himself, of whom Lowell said, in his Commemoration Ode:

"Life may be given in many ways,
And loyalty to Truth be sealed
As bravely in the closet as the field,
So bountiful is Fate;
But then to stand beside her,
When craven churls deride her,
To front a lie in arms, and not to yield,

This shows, methinks, God's plan
And measure of a stalwart man,
Limbed like the old heroic breeds,
Who stand self-poised on manhood's solid earth,
Not forced to frame excuses for his birth,
Fed from within with all the strength he needs,"

The second element of goodness comes naturally to a soul like this. "To love mercy" is the natural adornment of the strong, the brave, and the just. How Captain Philip, of the battleship *Texas*, grew in stature before the eye of the world when he hushed the shouts of his sailors in the moment of victory with his immortal sentence: "Do n't cheer, men. The poor fellows are dying!" Fighting Bob Evans could not have paid his sailors on the *Iowa* a more splendid compliment than when he said: "They fought like tigers while the battle lasted, but the moment it was over they sought to rescue their drowning enemies and minister to their needs with the tenderness of American women." The strength and heroism of these men loom all the larger because of their mercy.

One of the prettiest incidents of all the war-filled summer is the way a company of our soldiers in a camp protected a defenseless mother-bird who had made her nest on their parade-ground. As they swept across the field one day on the march, the lark and her home were discovered. The boys opened ranks and passed on. Succeeding companies followed their example; then, to insure future safety, the kind-hearted soldiers set up sticks around the nest, which remained undisturbed until the brood was hatched and flown.

No incident in Henry Ward Beecher's life, so filled with deeds of heroic justice and noble, manly struggle, is dearer to my heart than the picture of him on that last Sunday night of his life, when he had preached his last sermon in Plymouth Church, though he knew it not. He tarried a little after the congregation had retired, to listen while the organist and one or two

others were practicing a new musical arrangement of the hymn:

"I heard the voice of Jesus say,
'Come unto me and rest.'"

Mr. Beecher, doubtless on account of that fatigue which follows a pastor's busy Sunday, remained and listened. Two street urchins, ragged and barefooted, wandered into the building, and were standing gazing up at the organ. Mr. Beecher walked over to where the boys stood, laid his hands gently on their heads, and from the gallery they saw him turn the boyish faces upwards and kiss them, and, with one arm around each boy's shoulder, he left the scene of his triumphs, trials, and achievements forever. It was a fitting close to a grand life—the old man of genius and fame shielding two little wandering boys. Surely it was in the spirit of the Master who brought the best heaven had down to shield earth's weakest and poorest.

God often makes the merciful deed do far more good in bringing comfort and cheer than we can possibly estimate at the time. Dr. John W. Butler, superintendent of Methodist missions in Mexico, called one day on one of the officials of the Mexican Central Railway. Upon reaching his office, he was closeted with a visitor, and Dr. Butler was requested to wait a few minutes. As he took a seat in the outer office, a young man stepped from behind a desk, and, extending his hand, said: "You are Mr. Butler, the Protestant minister, I believe. Perhaps you do not remember me, but I remember you very well, though it is now seventeen years since we met."

"I am very glad to see you, sir," was Dr. Butler's reply. "Tell me, pray, where and how did we meet so many years ago?"

"Well, sir," continued the young man, "seventeen years ago this summer I, a mere lad at that time, was a passenger, with my parents, on the train from Vera Cruz. My mother was very ill. You were a fellow-passenger in the same car. You watched us closely, trying to care for and make comfortable my poor invalid mother. Seeing we had no pillow, nor even a substitute for it, you made a pillow of your overcoat, and insisted that mother use it. In a few moments she was sound asleep, enjoying that improvised pillow. We knew you were a Protestant minister; and though we were all Catholics, we always remembered that kindness on your part. My mother died five months afterward. But she never forgot you. A few hours before she died, she spoke of the kindness of the Protestant minister. My father died fifteen years later, and only a few days before his death he told me never to forget what you did for mother."

How that one little act of mercy had softened and sweetened, and not only comforted but made better, three people!

When we remember how God is always seeking to show mercy to people and to bring his mercy into saving relation to sinful hearts, we should ever seek to make it sure that at least two, God and ourselves, are seeking the salvation of every lost soul that comes within the reach of our influence. Mother Bickerdyke once said to Mary A. Livermore, "Every old soldier, no matter how drunken and worthless he is, may know

that he has two friends, God and me." Every sinner ought to be made to feel *that*, who knows us.

"Who stands there at my door?
Unkempt, in rags, on faltering feet,
Unsheltered from the noonday heat?
God knows—not I.
Mayhap in other years
A mother's holy tears
Fell in love's shower upon that sin-bowed head;
Mayhap in better days
He won a father's praise.
God knows—not I, how far those feet have fled.

Who knocks there at my door?
In tattered, faded shawl, clutched fast,
With eyes half bold, half downward cast?
God knows—not I.
Long since, in summer hours,
She gathered joy's sweet flowers,
Nor dreamed that sin was waiting just before;
Those eyes were true and bright,
Not clouded, as to-night
She stands there shelterless outside my door.

Who pleads there at my door?
A soul, clad in the dreadful rags of sin,
And saying low: 'Will no one take me in?
God hears—and I.
Soul, my heart-doors are wide,
Here dwelleth One who died,
Whose blood has cleansed me from the darkest stain.
Come in, shut fast the door,
Alone thou art no more.
With God, we two at last our home shall gain."

God grant that every one of us may be saved from going home empty-handed! May we so love mercy that we shall be able to take our sheaves with us! Dr.

Wayland Hoyt, recalling that in the old temple there was a gate called Beautiful, with leaves of gold, and pillars of exquisite carving, adorned with precious stones, and over the arch a golden grapevine from whence hung jewels for clusters of grapes, says that every Christian Church ought to have a Gate Beautiful—not a Gate Beautiful of gold and bronze and precious stones, but a gate built of something costlier far: a gate built of warm and loving hearts, going out in brotherhood and sisterhood to those who do not love the Lord, seeking to win them to him, and so to win them to his Church.

If we are to realize these characteristics of justice and mercy, it must be because we have the other characteristic of perfect goodness. We must walk humbly with God, and through that living faith that brings him consciously near to us we shall have the power to be both just and merciful. Humility is at the beginning of greatness. Science opens all doors in Nature's heart with the key of humility. The greatest scientist in the world must sit on Nature's floor like a child and ask questions. Selfishness and pride block the way to real greatness of character and life. It is the humble, unselfish soul that has clear and spiritual insight. It is told of Michael Angelo, the greatest sculptor the world has ever known, that it was his habit to work much at night, when quiet hours gave him opportunity for the severest thought. He found, however, that night labor was not without its disadvantages. No matter where he placed his light, at some critical moment, or in some unexpected place, his shadow was sure to be thrown upon the statue he

carved. But he at last hit upon a plan which did away with the difficulty. He fastened a candle to the stiff paper cap he wore while working, and then the light shone clear and full upon the portions of marble he was carving, with no shadow of himself flitting between his eyes and his work. Surely here is a lesson for us. If we throw our whole souls into our work, letting the light fall clearly upon it from the face of Him who is the Light of the world, we shall do our work well, and unconsciously our own characters will be transformed into his image.

A great life can only be lived by thus walking in vital faith in God. Many people fritter away the faith which was their inheritance from their religious ancestry. Sometimes we hear people talking of the loss of that simple, plain faith of their childhood in God and in prayer as though it were a small thing, but indeed it is the most terrible tragedy of human life.

“Upon the white sea sand
There sat a pilgrim band,
Telling the losses that their lives had known.

.
One spake with quivering lip
Of a fair-freighted ship,
With all his household to the deep gone down;
But one had wilder woe,
For a fair face, long ago
Lost in the darker depths of a great town.

Some mourned their vanished youth,
With a most loving ruth,
For its brave hopes and memories green;
And one upon the West
Turned an eye that would not rest
For far-off hills whereon its joy had been.

Some talked of vanished gold,
Some of proud honors told,
Some spoke of friends that were their trust no more.
And one of a green grave,
Beside a foreign wave,
That made him sit so lonely on the shore.

But when their tales were done,
There spake among them one,
A stranger, seeming from all sorrow free—
Sad losses have ye met,
But mine is heavier yet,
For a believing heart hath gone from me.'

'Alas!' these pilgrims said,
'For the living and the dead,
For fortune's cruelty, for love's sure cross,
For the wrecks of land and sea!
But, howe'er it came to thee,
Thine, stranger, is life's last and heaviest loss.'"

Let us cling to our faith in God, to the consciousness of his presence, to the tenderness of the conscience he has put in our breasts, and cherish that capacity for knowing him which is in all our hearts.

If any hear me who have never exercised that faith which lays hold upon Christ as a personal Savior, I pray God that the Holy Spirit may incline your heart now to turn from your sins with a full purpose of soul to forsake them, and that the eyes of your faith may behold Christ as he was smitten in your stead, as he suffered for you, and that you may, even now, tenderly, penitently, lovingly, unreservedly accept him as your sacrifice for sin, as your Savior unto eternal life!

XXII

The Easter Angels

A vision of angels.—*Luke xxiv, 23.*

EASTER-DAY is the day of the supernatural and the heavenly in our human life. Easter is either everything or nothing. It is the celebration of the conquest over death in the human form through Divine presence and power. To claim for a moment that the resurrection of Jesus Christ was achieved through any other means than the direct interference with the ordinary revolving of natural laws by the power of that God from whom issue all natural laws, is at once to brand it as a fraud of the basest sort. Easter stands for the triumph of light over darkness, of life over death, of the spiritual over the physical, the conquest of heaven over earth.

There are four parties that stand before us with peculiar interest and beauty in the resurrection story. The central figure is Jesus himself; next to him in interest the angels who came down to roll away the stone from the sepulcher, and to stand as the guard of honor at the empty tomb, and announce the good news of the Easter triumph. Next in interest come the women. Christmas had one Mary, but Easter has two. The women who had been so faithful to Christ through all the dark days of adversity, and who never deserted when all others fled in terror from the agony

of the cross; these women, with their tears and their precious perfume and their anxious love, are a tender part of the picture. Then, last of all, there are his disciples, his special friends,—impulsive, bold, blundering, sinning Peter; ever gentle, sensitive, loving John; and the rest, with their good and bad of human equipment; but all uniting in a deep, sacred sorrow for the crucified Christ.

Goethe, in his "Faust," in that splendid scene of the Easter bells and choruses, gives us a very graphic picture of the attitude of these different parties in the Easter drama. First we have the "Chorus of Angels:"

"Christ is arisen!
Mortal, all hail!
Thou, of earth's prison
Dreary and frail,
Bursting the veil,
Proudly hast risen!"

Then comes the "Chorus of the Women:"

"Rich spices and myrrh,
To embalm him we brought;
His corpse to inter
His true followers sought.
In pure cerements shrined,
'T was placed in the bier;
But, alas! We now find
That Christ is not here."

Then breaks in again the "Chorus of Angels:"

"Christ is arisen!
Speechless his love,
Who to earth's prison
Came from above,
Trials to prove.
Now is he risen!"

The other disciples now come upon the scene, and we have the "Chorus of the Disciples:"

"Death's gloomy portal
Now hath he rended—
Living, immortal, heav'nward ascended;
Freed from his anguish,
Sees he God's throne;
We still must languish,
Earth-bound, alone.
Now that he's reft us,
Heart-sad we pine;
Why hast thou left us,
Master divine?"

And then comes the final "Chorus of Angels," inspiring both the women and the disciples to a rapturous hope for themselves and an earnest evangelism, carrying the good news to others:

"Christ is arisen,
Death hath he slain;
Burst ye your prison,
Rend ye each chain!
Songs of praise lead ye,—
Love to show, heed ye,—
Hungry ones feed ye,—
Preaching, on speed ye,—
Coming joys plead ye,—
Then is the Master near,
Then is he here!"

It is these angels which I want to keep in the foreground of the picture for our comfort and cheer this morning.

I am impressed of the Easter angels, first of all, that they were angels of power. They were no weak-

lings. They did not come down from heaven as timid, ghostly visitants; they came as officers from the army of the skies. The earth quaked under their feet. Ah, it is not the great physical bludgeons that are the most powerful! Delicate moonbeams can lift a million million tons from the ocean depths and hurl them in tides up the sandy beach. And so in our own lives, not by the virtue of our muscles or of our brute force of any kind are we strong men and women, but by virtue of that harmony with God which makes us like the Easter angels, the embodiment of Heaven's power. Can you imagine the astonishment of those soldiers? They thought they were to guard that grave against the disciples of Jesus, a few weeping women, and a dozen discouraged and terrified men; people who had been fishermen and tax-gatherers. They looked on it as a sort of picnic. An easy enough contract it was for a company of well-armed veteran Roman soldiers to guard a sealed tomb against that little handful of broken-hearted country folks. They had not bargained to stand guard against angels, and the first angel that came in sight, with a countenance like the lightning and a tread which, though it was soft as light, made the earth shake under his feet, threw them into terror, and they first fell like dead men, and when they came to themselves, slunk into the city as fast as their legs could carry them. They were good soldiers to fight the barbarians with, but they were outclassed by the angels. It is good for a Christian to feel that these powerful angels are guardians of his path. God gives his angels charge over his children to keep them in all their ways, and if we could

behold, we would see that the forces that are for us are far more powerful than all that can be brought against us.

They were radiant angels, beautifully clothed. No wonder that in all lands the girls should like to have the pretty flowers in their hats, and that the beauty of Easter-bonnets should become proverbial, and all the world should wish to clothe itself in new raiment on Easter-day; it is but natural, since the angels set the fashion by the radiant garments which they wore down from heaven on the first Easter morning.

How beautiful heaven must be! He who has taken so much pains to make this world beautiful, who has taken such care in painting delicate flowers and in the shading of color in the leaves, so that not a single week in all the spring and summer and autumn verdure gets to be monotonous in its coloring; he who has a hundred colors and combinations of colors with which he paints the cheeks of the apples, and decks the bloom of the peach, and makes glorious the berries of the garden; he who illuminates the human countenance, giving it so great a range of expression and oftentimes transformations in the way of sympathy and love and faith that the angels themselves must look on with curious and longing eyes—the God who has wrought all this for us in the schoolroom of life; the God who makes even winter beautiful with its snow-storms, and old age glorious with its white hair, how glorious he must make the beautiful land which reveals the permanent and transcendent beauty of the spiritual life!

These angels were clothed with purity. Their gar-

ments were white as an emblem of holiness. We, too, are to wear white raiment in heaven. God has promised that, though we have soiled our garments with the scarlet stains of sin, yet the sacrificial blood of Jesus Christ, our Savior, is sufficient to wash away every stain and make the raiment of the soul as white as the snow. God forbid that any of us should be going with soiled garments when we may be clothed upon with spotless white!

The Easter angels were angels of sympathy. How tenderly they spoke to the weeping women! How gently they said: "Fear not, do not weep or mourn, come and see where the Lord lay. He is not here; he is risen." And then, when they did not appreciate the great truth that was being told them, the angels reasoned with them gently, and called to their remembrance the sayings of Christ, showing that his resurrection was according to his own promise; that he had told them before his crucifixion that he must be put to death, but that he would rise from the dead the third day. And so with sympathy and tenderness they comforted these sorrowing hearts by bringing to their remembrance the promises of Jesus.

So God sends his angels to comfort his children now. Paul declared that all the hosts of heaven are ministering spirits, whose great delight is to go on missions of mercy from the Heavenly Father, and minister to the heirs of salvation. The Christian can never be entirely alone in his troubles, for God will send some strong comforting angel to bring to his remembrance the precious promises upon which his soul may rest.

On one occasion during the Civil War, Abraham Lincoln was visiting a hospital, and found a young fellow whose legs had been amputated, and who was evidently sinking very rapidly.

"Is there anything I can do for you?" Lincoln asked.

"You might write a letter to my mother," said the dying soldier.

The President wrote at the young fellow's dictation: "My dearest mother,—I have been badly shot, but am bearing up. I tried to do my duty. They tell me I can not recover. Kiss Mary and John for me."

At the end the President put this postscript: "This letter was written by Abraham Lincoln." When the soldier looked over the letter, and saw the postscript, he looked up in astonishment, and asked: "Are you our President?"

"Yes," was the quiet answer. "And now that you know that I am the President, is there anything else I can do for you?"

Feebly the dying soldier replied: "I guess you might hold my hand, and see me through."

So, sitting down at the bedside, the great, tender-hearted Lincoln sat through the hours of the night holding the hand of the wounded soldier, until the angel of death came to release him.

And we may be sure that God, who has made the heart of man so tender, will not forget to send his angels to our comfort. When Paul was tried and troubled, and besought God to take away the thorn in his flesh, God sent the comforting angel to whisper in his ear, "My grace is sufficient for thee." He was

not more kind to Paul than he will be to you. We may depend upon it that he will "see us through" all the sorrows of life.

In turn, we ought to learn the lesson of comfort from God's angels so that we may be able to pass this comfort on to others. If we are to join the host of comforting angels after awhile, we ought to be learning something of the happy and holy art now. I would like to recommend, both to myself and to you, Robert Spears' "Wish," which he has put in a setting of song:

"That while I live, or when I die,
To know my happiness was no one's misery;
That no one's loss did ever swell my gain,
My pleasure never came from others' pain;
My joy was never sorrow to another,
That all should feel I ever was a brother—
So brotherly that it was sure to spoil
My rest to feel it came from others' toil—
Or that my strength was weakness to a neighbor's frame,
My honor purchased by another's shame;
Or that my home, or church, or land, was blessed
By what had other hearts and homes depressed.
My wish is this—to only hear the call
To bless the Hand, the Hand that gives to all."

These Easter angels are the bearers of good news. They were the first preachers of the resurrection of Christ. There has been a good deal of debate and argument as to whether the preachers of all the religious denominations belong to the apostolic succession or not, but every man or woman who with joyous and reverent heart tells the good tidings of the Easter Gospel to the world, may be sure of being in the angelic succession at least. Surely there is no

gospel that the world needs more than this! The shadow of death is upon every home and every heart, and this Easter Gospel is the one radiant light that is able to dispel that dark shadow. Just before I began to dictate this sermon to my secretary the other morning, I opened a letter from a lady who is a stranger to me, who resides in an Eastern city, who wrote to tell me of the sorrow that had come through death to a young woman who, when she was a little girl, found Christ under my ministry. The shadows had gathered round her of late with such accumulating blackness that it seemed to shut out even the sunshine of the heavenly hope, and her friend begged that I would send her a line of comfort and sympathy that might bring again some ray of light into her sorrowing heart. And that little letter seemed to me a sort of type of the sorrow of the world, the darkened windows of the heart that are upon every street and in every town. There is no gospel like the Easter Gospel for a world full of sorrow and sickness and death like ours. But the message of the angels fails entirely for us, and for this sad heart of which I have spoken, unless it teaches us that not only is Christ risen from the dead, but he is the certain pledge and promise of the victory over death of all our loved ones who have fallen asleep in Christ. The grave is empty and angels are there, angels of beauty and power and eternal life.

“No longer must the mourners weep,
Nor call departed Christians dead;
For death is hallowed into sleep,
And every grave becomes a bed.

Now once more
Eden's door
Open stands to mortal eyes;
For Christ hath risen, and man shall rise.
Now at last,
Old things past,
Hope, and joy, and peace begin;
For Christ hath won, and man shall win."

If we catch the spirit of these Easter angels as did those first Christians, there shall be glorious deeds accomplished by us in the early days to come. What a transformation came over those first disciples on the reception of this first Easter message! Up to this time they had been timid and doubtful and cowardly, fleeing at a shadow; but now all becomes changed, and in this new faith in the resurrected and glorified Christ they go forth to do and dare and die for their risen Lord. Before this a servant girl in the high priest's courtyard could frighten Peter into a denial of his Master. But afterwards, neither dungeon nor chains nor imprisonment, nor death itself, could make that dauntless spirit cower in his lifelong testimony for Christ. They went forth as conquerors. They did not seek the back streets nor the little towns, but in the great throngs and where the most people could be reached, there, with the air of conquerors, they told the story of the crucified and dead but risen and ascended Lord. And the Holy Spirit so clothed them with power, gave them such magnetism of speech and person that, unlearned and undisciplined as they were, they became mighty evangels for Christ. O, may we catch the full glow of the Easter angel's message! May the courage of it, and the glory of it, possess our

hearts, stimulate our lives, and send us forth to cry in the ears of men everywhere, "He is risen! He is risen!"

To some of you who are drawing nearer to the final sunrise, Easter means far more than it does to others, and far more than it did to you thirty or forty years back in your history. My good friend, Dr. W. B. Palmore, of St. Louis, tells how, during the Civil War, a fatherless boy was aroused from a profound slumber in an adjoining room at one o'clock at night, to see the sun of his life go out when his mother breathed her last. He secured a cheap casket and a borrowed grave in a gentleman's private cemetery, and laid his mother away under an apple-tree and the sod, "to await the judgment-day." Her quiet, rural resting-place was marked by a thin marble slab, on which was inscribed a part of the following lines:

"Alas for him who never sees
The stars shine through his cypress trees;
Who hopeless lays his dead away,
Nor looks to see the breaking day
Across the mournful marbles play;
Who hath not learned in hours of faith
The truth to flesh and sense unknown,
That life is ever lord of death,
And love will never lose its own;
For love will dream, and faith will trust,
That somehow, somewhere, meet we must."

With the last division of the dissolving armies of the Confederate States the boy surrendered at the close of the Civil War, and returned to the apple-orchard on the farm. The marble slab had been broken down, and on the various pieces were the scattered lines of the above poem.

The sacred dust was eventually removed to a lovely lot in a public cemetery, in the hush of a splendid forest, where the evening breezes are often freighted with the perfume of flowers and the night birds' pathetic songs. The broken economic marble slab of former and sadder years has been replaced by a beautiful block of marble, standing foursquare to the world. On this last monument are the words of Jesus, spoken into the eager ears and broken hearts of the Bethany sisters at the grave of their brother Lazarus: "I am the Resurrection and the Life: he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live; and whosoever liveth and believeth in me, shall never die!" In the meantime, or between the poetry on the thin marble slab and the eternal words on the marble block, the boy had found this Friend of the Bethany sisters in the pardon of his sins.

As to how the charms of Easter are enhanced by the flight of years, is strikingly illustrated in the life of Dr. Muhlenberg. In his early life he wrote the stanza:

"I would not live always; no, welcome the tomb:
Since Jesus hath lain there, I dread not its gloom."

On his death-bed he suggested and requested that the last line should be changed to—

"Since Jesus passed through there,
I dread not its gloom."

The terror of the grave is gone, for there lingers about it the fragrance of the presence of Christ and his angels.

XXIII

Anchors that Never Drag 'mid the Storms of Life

I exhort you to be of good cheer: . . . for there stood by me this night the angel of God, whose I am, and whom I serve, saying, Fear not, Paul; thou must be brought before Cæsar: and, lo, God hath given thee all them that sail with thee. Wherefore, sirs, be of good cheer: for I believe God, that it shall be even as it was told me.—*Acts xxvii, 22-25.*

LIFE itself is always the greatest teacher. Theories about life may be interesting, but only theories incarnate in life can be relied upon. There is nothing so worthy of study by those who desire to fulfill in the largest degree possible their mission in the world, as the lives of men and women who have struggled and conquered amid the same trials and difficulties which we have to face; nothing more profitable than to examine the sources of strength and courage which have been the reservoirs of nourishment that have saved great souls from despair, the anchors that have kept them from drifting when the storm was high and the currents treacherous.

Paul was one of the strongest men that ever lived, and, counting in the long run of the centuries, one of the most successful. To end one's life by being beheaded looks like failure and defeat at the time; but when it is a martyrdom for a good cause, as one looks back at it, it is only a fitting climax for a growing and

splendid career. In the great fight which Paul made as the evangel of Jesus Christ in pagan lands, he is characterized by nothing more striking than by his superb courage, his magnificent cheerfulness, that clothed him about under all circumstances with a majesty full of inspiration. It is a worthy purpose and one full of promise of rich rewards to us to seek and find, if we can, the anchors which held Paul in safety amid the savage storms that swept across the sea of his life.

The incident from the account of which I have read a few verses as a text is a very attractive one. A storm had overtaken the ship in which Paul was being taken as a prisoner to Rome to be tried before Cæsar. The storm had lasted a good while, and the ship was evidently in great danger. The sailors themselves had given up all hope of escape, and in the midst of this universal gloom and foreboding Paul stood out to give them this word of good cheer. Now, according to my mind, in these few verses we have uncovered the great sources of Paul's strength, the huge anchors that kept him from drifting to discouragement and despair.

The first of these is suggested in this phrase, "I believe God." There was the man's great sheet-anchor. The storm might be severe, but back of the storm, and in the storm, to Paul, was God. The others were utterly overwhelmed with fear, because they were like Elijah when he was hiding in the mountain-cave after flying from Jezebel. The storm roared through the mountains, and the thunder rolled, and the lightning flashed, and the wind whistled; but God was not in

it anywhere to his imagination. So these sailors saw no God in the storm. To their thinking, they were but the playthings of a hard and cruel fate, or the victims of some angry deity. One does not wonder at their despair under the circumstances. But Paul could stand out with a smiling face, and cry, "Sirs, be of good cheer: for I believe God." Such a faith makes men strong, and a nation of such people is strong.

In 1848, when every throne on the continent of Europe was either seriously shaken or overturned, the Queen of England could walk and drive about as usual in safety. M. Guizot, the French statesman of the era, said to Lord Shaftesbury: "I will tell you what has saved your empire. It was not your police, it was not your army, it was not your statesmen; it was the deep, solemn, religious atmosphere that is breathed over the whole people of England." The nation was steadfast because of its sublime faith in God. The great revival under the Wesleys and Whitefield called the nation back to belief in God and to a sense of responsibility to God. And this is our great anchor to-day. But some one will say there never was a time when there was such uneasiness in Christian circles in regard to faith. Every little while the papers have the headlines that tell of some prominent minister that has drifted from the old moorings of faith in God and in his Word. My answer is, that while it is probably true that there never was an age so inquisitive and so earnest and relentless in seeking out foundations for faith, there never has been a time in the world's history, during the days of recorded history, when there were so many men and women with steadfast faith

in God and his Word, or when they had such sure proof of the truthfulness of his Word as to-day. Almost every month the spades that are digging down into that old land that gave us the Bible are giving us some new evidence to show that the Old Testament is an absolutely credible record. No discovery has been more interesting than some of those recently made.

There is no more romantic character in the Old Testament than Esther. There is no story in the Bible with sharper contrasts than the tale of Haman and Mordecai. The startling details of the story have, in the minds of some people, thrown discredit upon it. But now the curious spades have dug down in Hamadan, the summer residence of the old Persian monarchs, and proved that romantic and fascinating book to be full of the truth of history. For a long time a certain mound in the vicinity of that city was pointed out by Jewish tradition as covering the tomb of Queen Esther; but no attention was paid to the story by travelers or archæologists, who deemed it improbable that after such a length of time the tomb should be identified. The mound has recently been explored and found to contain two tombs separated from each other by a small corridor, and in each was found a sarcophagus of dark wood, covered with Hebrew inscriptions. These have been deciphered and translated, and, to the astonishment of the investigators, it was found that one sarcophagus was that of Mordecai and the other of Esther. On the sarcophagus of the former was inscribed: Here is the holy ark of Mordecai the Righteous. May his merits pro-

tect us! Amen." The same inscription is repeated on each side of the coffin, besides these verses from the Bible: "Now, in Shushan, the palace, there was a certain Jew, whose name was Mordecai, the son of Shimei, the son of Kish, a Benjamite, son of —" The other is: "Then shall thy light break forth as the morning, and thine health shall spring forth speedily; and thy righteousness shall go before thee; the glory of the Lord shall be thy rereward."

On the great coffin of Esther, the inscriptions are numerous. Among them occur the following sentences: "Therefore my heart is glad, and my glory rejoiceth: my flesh also shall rest in hope. For thou wilt not leave my soul in hell; neither wilt thou suffer thine Holy One to see corruption. Thou wilt shew me the path of life: in thy presence is fullness of joy; at thy right hand there are pleasures for evermore." Thus, twenty-four hundred years afterwards, the drifting sands of the desert are rolled back like the leaves of a book to bear this undeniable testimony to the credibility of a disputed book in God's Word. There never was a day when the testimony was so overwhelming as to the faithfulness of the Bible as the Word of God. Let us hold on to our faith in God, open our hearts to him, follow him with love, and our courage and strength shall never fail.

This leads us to the second anchor which Paul uncovers in this brief paragraph: "For there stood by me this night the angel of God, whose I am." This is the anchor of Christian experience—the assurance that God has heard our prayer and that he has revealed himself to us. And what a supreme anchor

that is! As Dr. Watkinson says so pertinently, there is a whole world of difference between the mere intellectual perception of a doctrine and the realization of that doctrine in our own consciousness and feeling. It is like the difference between some prisoner shut up in the heart of a city who knows the changing seasons of the year only as they appear in the almanac or as he may read about it in a newspaper, compared to knowing the spring by watching the dance of the daffodils, feeling the kiss of the south wind, or hearing the music of the robins. You do not know the summer when you only read about it in a book, you only really know it in the glitter of the shower, the flush of the rainbow, the smell of the roses; and the autumn, how can you know it, unless you taste the sweetness of the orchards, and walk through golden corn? And winter, what does it mean unless you feel the cutting wind or marvel at the whiteness of the snowstorm? It is one thing to know the seasons of the year from the almanac, and another thing to feel them in the body, to have our eyes and ears flooded with their changing sights and sounds and harmonies. And so it is one thing to know religion from a statement of creed, and another thing to know it in a joyous communion with Jesus Christ, that gives the sense of pardoned sin, that makes the heart burn within the breast while the treasure-caves of the Scriptures are opened before impoverished eyes. We are not to believe in Christ or be his followers as men are the followers of Napoleon or Cæsar or George Washington; but we are to give ourselves to him until we can say of him as Paul did, "Whose I am." "I must believe in the

Holy Ghost, not simply as an exegete; I must rejoice in his witness, and feel his fire. I must believe in immortality, not as a philosophical inference; I must believe in the resurrection as Paul did, who felt the resurrection power already in his own soul; I must believe in heaven as John did, who in the spirit saw the ineffable glory, and heard the eternal music." When we have such an experience we have an anchor that will not drag in any storm.

When Colonel Havelock was in India with his regiment, he took with him a Bethel tent, in which he preached the gospel every Sunday. For this he was reported at headquarters for acting in a non-military and disorderly manner. The commander-in-chief, Lord Gough, caused the reports of the moral state of the various regiments to be read for some time back, and he found that Colonel Havelock's stood first on the list; there was less drunkenness, less flogging, less imprisonment in it than any other. When that was done, the commander-in-chief said, "Go and tell Colonel Havelock, with my compliments, to baptize the whole army."

Havelock's regiment became the most reliable and famous in the army. On a certain occasion the commanding officer sent orders to a battalion to move in a certain direction and take a fort.

"They can not go, sir," was the reply.

"What is the reason they can not go?" demanded the general.

"They are all drunk, sir."

"Then," said the general, "bring out Havelock and his saints; they're never drunk, and they're never afraid."

The third anchor which we have revealed as one of Paul's sources of stability and power is his devoted service to God: "For there stood by me this night the angel of God, whose I am, and whom I serve." There was something that gave steadfastness and continuity to his life. His obedience to God gave him freedom from all little and petty slaveries. He was the servant of the King of kings, and was ennobled and dignified by it. A life of service is a life of force and usefulness, it gets stronger and more splendid as it goes on. A life that is lived for pleasure or ambition or for any selfish purpose is greatest in its earlier days, and as such a career comes toward old age it is crippled and narrowed, and finally ends in darkness; but a life of supreme service to God becomes larger and more gracious and helpful as it nears the end of its earthly course.

I was reading recently a graphic description of the Amazon River, which has its source not more than a hundred miles from the Pacific Ocean, and yet, instead of flowing westward and briefly finishing its course, turns to the east, and forms a waterway nearly three thousand miles in length before it reaches the Atlantic Ocean on the opposite side of the continent. It drains the slope of the Andes for two thousand miles, sweeping into its masterful current other rivers almost as large as itself. Deeper and deeper it cuts its channel, until, just before it enters the sea, its tremendous mass of water is three hundred feet in depth and hundreds of miles in width. Then, with its vast, accumulated force, it hurls itself into the ocean, pushing its pure, fresh tide five hundred miles out from

shore, so that sometimes many days before they sight land the sailors dip up its unsalted current and get a foretaste of the unseen country toward which they are sailing. A helpful life, completely surrendered to God in faithful service, is like that. It cuts its own dignified way through the land. By the very gravitation of God it goes onward to its purpose. It blesses all life that touches it. Storms may beat over it, but it goes ever onward to its destiny. Depend upon it that in sincere and faithful service to God, doing the work to which he calls you, you have an anchor that will never drag, no matter how fierce the storm.

Of only one other anchor shall I speak, and that is the assurance that the Christian has that his life shall be, and is, a blessing to others. How Paul's heart must have warmed within him as he heard these words of the angel: "God hath given thee all them that sail with thee." If we have given ourselves to God so completely that his joy is in our hearts, and his service engages our thought and attention, then we shall be magnetic forces to bring other lives to Christ.

On one of the Samoan Islands John Williams found a small chapel and about fifty persons who called themselves Christians, each one of whom wore a white cloth tied on his arm to distinguish him from his neighbors. The leader among them said that he had heard a little about the Christian religion from some people not far away, and that he used to go to them once in awhile to bring home some religion. "And when that is gone, I take my canoe and fetch some more. Now, won't you give us a man all full of religion, so that I won't have to risk my life going after it?"

It is the religion that fills the heart and life to overflowing that makes the life Christlike, and which fascinates our fellow-travelers and makes them long to enjoy the same blessing that has come to us.

Donatello, of Florence, as the story goes, once asked Brunelleschi for his opinion of a crucifix he had executed. "What you have there done is no Christ," was his reply, "but a peasant nailed to the cross."

"To find fault is easier than to do better," answered Donatello, gruffly.

Brunelleschi took the rebuff quietly, and secretly executed a crucifix for himself. One morning Donatello entered his studio straight from the market, bringing in his apron fruit, cheese, and eggs for the mutual breakfast. So startled was he at sight of the crucifix that he raised his hands in astonishment, and let everything in his apron fall to the ground.

"How are we now to breakfast?" cried Brunelleschi.

"Pick up what you like," answered Donatello. "I, for my part, have had my breakfast for to-day. I see truly that you are made for Christs, and my art is fit for nothing more than peasants."

O, for the power from heaven to fall upon each one of us, fitting us for Christs, in the circles where we live our daily lives! Then shall we be anchored in our Christian course by the very blessing we are to others. God will give them to us as sheaves for the heavenly garner, and we shall have treasures so precious that no storm of temptation will be able to break our hold on this Divine life.

XXIV

Christ's Message to "The Man with the Hoe"

Come unto me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.—*Matthew xi, 28.*

IN 1860, Jean François Millet, who was himself a farmer's lad, and who has painted his childhood's life-blood into such immortal works as "The Gleaners," "The Sheep Shearers," and "The Angelus," painted a picture which he called, "The Man with the Hoe." Edwin Markham, the California poet, became fascinated with this picture, and wrote in a poem under the same title the sad and tragic vision which came to him. Markham awoke, not long after, to find himself famous. The poem is so full of vitality, and has aroused so much attention and discussion, that it is surely worth our while seriously to consider what hope Christianity has to hold out to "The Man with the Hoe." First of all, however, let us get well in mind the poem itself:

"Bowed with the weight of centuries, he leans
Upon his hoe, and gazes on the ground,
The emptiness of ages in his face,
And on his back the burden of the world.
Who made him dead to rapture and despair,
A thing that grieves not, and that never hopes,
Stolid and stunned, a brother to the ox?
Who loosened and let down his brutal jaw?

Whose was the hand that slanted back his brow?
Whose breath blew out the light within his brain?
Is this the thing the Lord God made, and gave
To have dominion over sea and land;
To trace the stars and search the heavens for power;
To feel the passion of eternity?
Is this the dream He dreamed who shaped the suns
And pillared the blue firmament with light?
Down all the stretch of hell to its last gulf
There is no shape more terrible than this;
More tongued with censure of the world's blind greed;
More filled with signs and portents for the soul;
More fraught with menace to the universe.

What gulfs between him and the seraphim!
Slave of the wheel of labor, what to him
Are Plato and the swing of Pleiades?
With the long reaches of the peaks of song,
The rift of dawn, the reddening of the rose?
Through this dread shape the suffering ages look;
Time's tragedy is in that aching stoop;
Through this dread shape humanity betrayed,
Plundered, profaned, and disinherited,
Cries protest to the judges of the world,
A protest that is also prophecy.

O masters, lords, and rulers in all lands,
Is this the handiwork you give to God,
This monstrous thing distorted and soul-quenched?
How will you ever straighten up this shape;
Give back the upward-looking and the light;
Rebuild in it the music and the dream;
Touch it again with immortality;
Make right the immemorial infamies,
Perfidious wrongs, immedicable woes?

O masters, lords, and rulers in all lands,
How will the Future reckon with this Man?
How answer his brute question in that hour
When whirlwinds of rebellion shake the world?

How will it be with kingdoms and with kings—
With those who shaped him to the thing he is—
When this dumb Terror shall reply to God
After the silence of the centuries?"

Whatever one may think of this poem, there can be no doubt whatever that the poet reads into the picture a message which the painter never dreamed of teaching. Millet was himself born a peasant lad, and found no impassable barrier from the hoe of the farmer to the brush of the artist. He never felt the burden of the world on his back, crushing the life out of him. By hard work and self-denying earnestness, he found an open pathway from the fields to fortune. He captured the world by the force of his industrious genius. There can be no doubt that his purpose was to paint the portrait of a contented worker in his picture of "The Man with the Hoe."

Yet we all know that while Edwin Markham has not given the true interpretation of Millet's picture, he has read into it the sorrow and tragedy of a large class of humanity. There are in our great cities, rather than in the country fields, multitudes of people about whom one might reasonably ask:

"Who made him dead to rapture and despair,
A thing that grieves not, and that never hopes,
Stolid and stunned, a brother to the ox?
Who loosened and let down his brutal jaw?"

The picture given in those lines is very graphic, and yet in a multitude of cases it is not exaggerated. There are many men and women who from their childhood have been so hedged about by squalor and sin that they live on in it, in a stolid, ugly sort of way,

without any real dream or hope of anything better. When you undertake to fix the responsibility, you have hard work. It lies largely in the lack of public spirit, Christian spirit, on the part of the great mass of responsible citizens who, if they could be aroused to look, not every man on his own things, but on the things of others, in the spirit of the Golden Rule, could very rapidly transform some of these hideous conditions which are brutalizing men and women. The most horrible thing about it is that the brutalizing process begins with little children, and childhood is robbed of its sweet inheritance of joy and gladness.

In this country at least it is not possible for us to fall back on denunciation of the kings and queens and rulers of the earth, for we are our own rulers. When we made King George a cup of tea in Boston harbor, using a whole ship's cargo for the brewing, we served notice on the whole order of kings and royal families that we would henceforth attend ourselves to the matter of government. The greatest difficulty in this self-government of ours lies in the lack of public spirit on the part of the most intelligent and personally moral and religious people of the community. In every large town and city there are thousands of people whose personal interest and principles would lead them to exercise their rights of citizenship from high motives and on right lines if they could be aroused to exercise them at all, who are practically nonentities in the civic life of the community where they live. The result of all this is, that men are sent to the city councils and to the State legislatures as the agents or attorneys of people who are anxious to have legis-

lation, not for the public good, but for the benefit of their own private property interests. Law is for sale in these legislatures, and this is true in some of the largest and most important States of the Union. Laws are conceived, passed through committees, passed by the legislatures, and signed, and go upon the statute-books, as truly a case of bargain and sale as any transaction that occurs every day in the stock exchange. Henry Ward Beecher used to say that the chief duty of a legislator is to get back again next winter. His second duty is to put himself under that extraordinary providence that takes care of legislators' salaries. The old miracle of the prophet and the meal and the oil is outdone immeasurably in our days, for they go there poor one year and go home rich; in two years they become money-lenders—all by a trust in that gracious providence that takes care of the legislators' salaries. Their next duty after that is to serve the party that sent them up; and then, if there is anything left of them, it belongs to the people. Some one has said, very wisely, that if a man traveling wishes to relish his dinner he would better not go into the kitchen to see where it is being cooked; and it is true that if a man wishes to respect the law he would better not go to the legislature to see where it is cooked. Now the responsibility for this state of things lies very largely upon the shoulders of Christian men who are too busy making money to pay the attention which is due from them as citizens. One reason why Christian citizens are so lethargic is that many people fail to see the very close relation between practical politics and the physical,

intellectual, and religious life of the people. They fail to see that dirty politics means dirty water, and dirty streets, and tenement-houses that go without inspection, sweatshop factories, and impure and unwholesome conditions where the poor sicken and sorrow and become more brutal and hopeless.

Markham asks:

"Is this the dream He dreamed who shaped the sun
And pillared the blue firmament with light?"

We know that it is not God's dream of man that he should be hopeless, and stunted, and dwarfed, and in despair. God's dream of man is of a thing of beauty and nobility. It is "man's inhumanity to man" that "makes countless thousands mourn."

It is well not to lose sight of the fact that poverty alone does not degrade and debase the soul. The poet asks, or rather exclaims:

"What gulfs between him and the seraphim!"

But there is no gulf between man and the angels simply because he is poor in purse. Lazarus was poor, so poor that he lay out at the rich man's gate, and was glad of the crumbs that the servants threw to him; and not only poor, but afflicted, and could not drive away the dogs that came to lick his sores. But there was no gulf between Lazarus and the angels, and his heart was so wholesome and pure, and his inner self so heavenly in its spirit, that when he died the angels came and took him up as a brother and carried him to Abraham's bosom. The gulf that shut off the angels was between Dives and them, for when

Dives died he found a great gulf fixed between his place of remorse and heaven. The size of a man's pocket-book by no means indicates the purity of his soul or the condition of his spiritual life.

We must all agree with the poet that large numbers of humanity in all lands are

"Plundered, profaned, and disinherited."

Greed works its vicious will in many places. There are employers who grind the faces of their workmen beyond the possibility of comfortable, wholesome, hopeful life. Drunkenness is thrust in the path of the poor and the weak; children who inherit a taste for intoxicating drinks against which their puny vitality furnishes but little force to fight, have put in their way licensed grogeries, legally permitted and protected by the Government of the people. More than anything else in this land, that permitted and protected liquor-saloon profanes and plunders and disinherits "The Man with the Hoe." If you should ask what it is which more than anything else has "loosened and let down his brutal jaw," you would be compelled to answer that where poverty makes one man a brute, drunkenness makes a thousand men to wallow in the mire.

Our poet does not offer a solution, but he asks the question which we are compelled to ask:

"How will you ever straighten up this shape;
Give back the upward-looking and the light;
Rebuild in it the music and the dream;
Touch it again with immortality?"

Ah, that is the question of the ages! There is no quack way of doing that. When you bring back

the dream of hope, give the upward look, take the stoop out of the shoulders, and inspire the soul, you will need Christ to do again what he did with the man with an unclean spirit in the land of the Gadarenes—the man who had been dwelling in the tombs, living the life of an outlaw; who had been bound by chains, but had snapped them asunder like cobwebs. There can be no doubt that sin and sorrow had profaned and plundered and disinherited him; no doubt there was a stoop in his shoulders, a brutal drop to his jaw, a hopelessness in his eyes, until he came in contact with Jesus Christ. But Christ changed it all. He took the despair out of his soul, and filled his heart again with the dreams of a noble life. Christ brought the light of love and peace again into his eyes, and he sat clothed and in his right mind. Christ has not lost that magic power: he is doing the same thing in the world to-day. The hope for “The Man with the Hoe,” as well as for every other man in the world, lies in coming in contact with Jesus Christ, and learning from him that man was made to be, that man may be, the son of God. Christ in politics, Christ in business circles, Christ in social life, Christ in individual human hearts, is to destroy the brute, bring forth the angel, and glorify humanity.

Let us not despair because we are compelled to labor for the salvation of the race in the midst of the din and smoke of perplexing modern conditions; for it is out of these very prosaic and hardening circumstances that Christ proposes to develop the most beautiful life that humanity has ever known. Dr. W. L. Watkinson, of London, has been preaching a sermon

on the difference between the old Eden and the new heaven and new earth which are to be far more beautiful and glorious. He declares that, through God's grace, Gethsemane will do more for man than Eden did, and that we shall come out of this life of difficulty and pain and tears with a glorious character. We are to come out of it the very pride and glory of heaven. In the wonderful vision which John saw on Patmos, when he who had charge of him would show him the most splendid thing in heaven, he caused to pass before the astonished apostle a great procession, and then asked him, "What are these which are arrayed in white robes? And whence came they?" And John answered him, "Sir, thou knowest." And the reply came back, "These are they which came out of great tribulation, and have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb." When heaven's officer wanted to show John the most glorious thing in the skies, he did not point out the cherubim or the seraphim or the archangel with his great purple wings, but showed him, as the special glory and pride of heaven, people who have come up through the smoke and trial of the earth.

Awhile ago there was a great flower-show in London, and the peculiarity of it was that all the flowers were grown in London. It is an easy matter to grow flowers out in the country, under the blue skies, in the sweet, clear air and the bright light. It is a small matter to rear in the open fields beautiful blossoms and marvelous forms of elegance and of color; but it is a very different thing to grow prize lilies and roses, orchids and palms, on narrow window-sills, in

dingy cellars, and in dusty attics. There was a pathos about those flowers that could never be about flowers grown out in the country fields under the blue skies, where all nature brooded over them like the bosom of God. No wonder Queen Victoria and the nobility went to see those flowers. They had been reared in defiance of the smoke of myriads of chimneys, in spite of dust and shadow and darkness, and had come to beauty amid the most discouraging conditions on earth. And so it is that heaven's glory and pride is not in the angels who have grown in everlasting sunshine, but in the human blossoms which have grown here on the earth in the midst of poverty and struggle and coffins. "These are they which came out of great tribulation."

God make us worthy of our great privilege! If your circumstances are narrow, your burdens heavy, and your conditions such as "the Man with the Hoe," thank God that you have a hoe. Millet hoed himself to success and fortune and usefulness. Abraham Lincoln hoed himself not only to be President of the United States, but the emancipator of a race. The mightiest men and women who have ever lived have begun with the hoe, and some of them have staid with it, and lived and died in poverty, but have never lost the upward look, have never lost the dream out of their souls, have ever kept touch with immortality, have been brother to the angels, and have been carried on their wings at last to the paradise of God.

XXV

The Man who Found Himself

When he came to himself.—*Luke xv, 18.*

ONE of the prettiest fancies in modern fiction is Rudyard Kipling's story of "The Ship that Found Herself." The author tells us that if you lay your ear to the side of the cabin, the next time you are in a steamer, you will hear hundreds of little voices in every direction, thrilling and buzzing, and whispering and popping, and gurgling and sobbing and squeaking, like a telephone in a thunderstorm. We are told the story of a ship that was new built, and steamed out from Liverpool with her first load of freight. The novelist, with his wonderful power of giving life and reality to everything he touches, reports to us the conversation which went on between the different parts of the vessel as soon as the strain of the sea began to be felt. As soon as the waves began to beat over the vessel, the capstan sputtered with indignation, the deck-beams grumbled back, the ten thousand rivets chattered with fright, the upper deck-stringers groaned, the big iron screw gave warning words, the thrust-block uttered its complaint, and the steam—older than all of them—saved them from utter rout by inspiring rivet and stringer and beam with hope through stories of past experience. And so, throughout the long and stormy voyage, from every

part of the vessel there was constant discord and strife, protesting against each other and against the strain and the wrenching of the waves. As she was starting out on her voyage, the captain said about the *Dimbula* (for that was the ship's name): A ship is in no sense a rigid body closed at both ends. She's a highly complex structure of various and conflicting strains, with tissues that must give and take, according to her personal modulous elasticity. Even after a pretty girl has christened a ship, it does not follow that there's such a thing as a ship under the men that work her. She's all there, but the parts of her have not learned to work together yet. But when the *Dimbula*, having weathered the storm and made her way across the ocean, was coming into New York Harbor, suddenly all the voices of the capstan, stringers, deck-beams, screw, shaft, engines, and rivets, ceased and melted into one deep voice, which was "the soul of the ship." She had "found herself." She had received, as the old sailors say, "her sweetening."

I am sure there is theme enough here for our study. A man, like a ship, must find himself. The voyage of life is opportunity, privilege, sea-room. In storm and shine, amid winds and currents, battling with the waves, pressing ever onward, a man must find himself. Nothing else counts if that fails.

A man must find himself in the sense of finding his particular place in the work of life—the particular trade or avocation or profession in which he is to exert his store of energy, and thus earn his bread and give value received for the price of existence in this world. Sometimes this comes easily. Some

people are born into the world with so strong a bent or tendency towards some special line of work that nothing short of a crime against a light brighter than the sun could ever turn them from it.

Two little children were once walking in the woods in Austria—a boy and a girl—when the boy said, thoughtfully, "Sister, what a beautiful place this would be to pray!"

Frederica asked, wonderingly, "What shall we pray for?"

"Why, for papa and mamma," said her brother. "You see how sad they look. Poor mamma hardly ever smiles now, and I know it must be because she has not always bread enough for us. Let us pray to God to help us."

So these two sweet children knelt down and prayed, asking the Heavenly Father to bless their parents, and make them a help to them.

"But how can we help papa and mamma?" asked the girl.

"Why, do n't you know?" replied Wolfgang. "My soul is full of music; and by and by I shall play before great people, and they will give me plenty of money, and I will give it to our dear parents, and we will live in a fine house and be happy."

At this a loud laugh astonished the boy, who did not know that any one was near them. Turning, he saw a fine gentleman, who had overheard their conversation. The stranger made inquiries, which the little girl answered, telling him: "Wolfgang can play beautifully, though he is only six years old, and means to be a great musician. He thinks that he

can earn money so that we shall be no longer poor." The interested gentleman was the emperor of Austria, and his awakened kindness gave the boy a chance for his life career.

Now, it is a great blessing to have one's career marked out so plainly as that; and such cases in every department of life are common enough. These indications should always be noted and obeyed as the voice of God. What folly to take a man born to handle machinery, to whom the buzz of wheels and the pulsing of steam is like the music of angels, and undertake to make a preacher of him! What folly to take a man with a head for mathematics, to whom the multiplication-table is full of romance, and turn him away into the law or medicine! And the reverse is just as bad, though not always so hard on the public.

One of the saddest and most pathetic things we meet with in every-day life is the army of misfits, the unmatched, mismated lives that have gone into the wrong pigeon-hole, and do not know how to get out. The waste of human resource is something tremendous; the martyrdom of happiness, the crucifixion of enthusiasm, is enough to break one's heart. Do not think it is a small matter that you find your right place, that you find yourself, and, when you have found yourself—whether as farmer or mechanic or teacher or artist or engineer or editor or lawyer or preacher—do not underrate your work or your place.

All necessary work to advance human civilization, which helps to make the world happier and nobler, is honorable work. It is a part of God's plan.

Do n't think for a moment that men or women can be catalogued as farmers or poets or doctors or mortormen—as though all men in a class were of the same sort. Having found the work where you can toil best, be sure you find yourself in your work. Whatever your work is, do it ideally; glorify it by a high and lofty purpose. Many a man shoes horses at the cross-roads in a spirit more heroic and splendid than that of another man who toys with the affairs of nations. Many a woman brings to her sewing-machine or her darning of stockings a spirit of romance and poetry more beautiful in the eyes of angels than that which controls another woman who sits in her box at the opera amid the fashion and beauty of a city's splendor. It is not the work that our fingers do, but the spirit in which we perform it, the heroism of love, the exaltation of purpose, that crowns it and beautifies it and makes it glorious.

A man must find himself in the harmonious working of his own nature. Amid the ceaseless strain of life he must come to have a healthy, wholesome self-composure, so that body and mind and soul work together and have one harmonious voice. A man, like a ship, must get his sweetening amid the storm. Some ships never get it, and they wrench themselves to pieces. Some men never find themselves, and they die among the husks and the swine, cast upon the sandbar, wrecked along the coast of life. But to do anything great in the world, or, what is a great deal more important, to be anything great, a man must find himself in that harmony of spirit which gives him the mastery over himself. Solomon the wise

put it very mildly when he said that the man who rules his own spirit is greater than the man who captures the mayor's chair of a city. It would have been within the bounds of truth if he had declared him greater than one who captures the whole world; and was not that what Christ said, "What shall it profit a man if he gain the whole world and lose himself?"

Dr. C. O. Johnston tells the story of a merchant who, needing a boy, put this sign in his window: "Boy wanted. Wages four dollars a week; six dollars to the right one. The boy must be master of himself." Many parents who had sons were interested, but the latter part of the notice puzzled them. They had never thought of teaching their boys to be master of themselves. However, many sent their sons to the merchant to apply for the situation.

As each boy applied, the merchant asked him: "Can you read?"

"Yes, sir," was the frank reply.

"Can you read this?" asked the merchant, pointing out a certain passage in a paper.

"Yes, sir."

"Will you read it to me steadily and without a break?"

"Yes, sir."

The merchant then took the boy into a back room, where all was quiet, and shut the door. Giving the boy the paper, he reminded him of his promise to read the passage through steadily and without a break, and commanded him to read. The boy took the paper, and bravely started. While he was read-

ing, the merchant opened a basket, in which were a number of lively little puppies, and tumbled them around the boy's feet. The temptation to turn and see the puppies and note what they were doing was too strong, and the boy looked away from his reading, blundered, and was at once dismissed.

Boy after boy underwent the same treatment, till seventy-six were thus tried and proved failures in the mastery of themselves. At last one was found who, in spite of the puppies playing around his feet, read the passage through as he had promised.

When he had finished, the merchant was delighted, and asked him, "Did you not see the puppies that were playing around your feet while you were reading?"

"No, sir."

"Did you not know that they were there?"

"Yes, sir."

"Why did you not look to see what they were doing?"

"I could n't, sir, while I was reading what I said I would."

"Do you always do what you say you will?"

"Yes, sir; I try to."

"You're the boy I want," said the merchant, enthusiastically. "Come to-morrow. Your wages will start at six dollars, with good prospect of increase."

That is just the difference between the two men who start out side by side, with equal opportunities and privileges, and, twenty years after, one is a drunken tramp and the other a pillar of social and business and church life. One man found himself in

self-mastery, and, fixing his eye upon a great purpose, followed it with devotion and consecration, while the other stopped to play with the puppies. What are you doing? Climbing ever upward, with the enthusiasm of a whole-hearted harmonious devotion to your mission, or on the floor, playing with the puppies? That question is a judgment-seat worth using.

There is another sense in which a man should find himself—in the harmonious working of all his powers. A man should make all his parts go together, so to speak. As rivet and stringer and deck beam and capstan and screw and steam must all work together to make a ship that will ride safely through the storm and bring its cargo into the harbor; so a man, in physical and intellectual and spiritual combination, should come to be one harmonious whole in which all things work together for the good of the career, the mission, the purpose, of a man's life. In order for that, the spirit of the life must be high and noble. A life lived simply for show is never harmonious; but a life given to helpful service can sing as it works, and all its parts blend together in harmony.

The lack of harmony in some lives reminds one of the public school in an Eastern town where a distinguished visitor was addressing the pupils on the necessity of obeying their teacher and growing up to be useful, loyal, and patriotic citizens. To emphasize his remarks, he pointed to a large national flag that almost covered one end of the room, and said, "Now, boys, who can tell me what that flag is there for?"

One little fellow, who understood the local conditions better than the speaker, replied: "I know, sir. It's to hide the dirt."

Many people make a show of patriotism and religion to hide their cowardice or their selfishness. Such a life is never harmonious.

There is a little fable of a drinking-fountain. A marble angel, beautifully sculptured, stood pointing to heaven. Then came polished granite inscribed with gilt letters, and then massive slabs of stone. But the water came through a small brass pipe, and the people drank from an iron cup attached to an iron chain. And the marble angel pointing heavenward would have done nobody any good but for the brass pipe and the iron cup.

One day the devil came and tempted the pipe to say, "If they do not make me of gold, I will not belong to the thing." And the cup came under the evil spell, and said, "I must be of silver, or I shall be ashamed to be here at all."

But the good angel came down and drove away the devil, and, ashamed of themselves, they went to work again as of yore; and the angel heard them singing, the trio of them—common water, common pipe, and common cup—and this was the song they sang, "Well, they can't do without us, and we must do our part along with the marble angel and the polished granite."

Brother, the world needs, more than anything else, that you shall find yourself in a lofty, exalted personality. This is the age of great fortunes, of giant trusts, of everything mammoth in material things. But what

the world needs most is great men and women, large personalities, tall souls, lofty spirits, to breathe the air of the mountain heights—souls that live in the spirit of Jesus Christ, not seeking to be ministered unto, but to minister.

Abraham Lincoln was, as you know, a very tall man. A great many stories have been told concerning the impression made by his unusual height. One of them records that two gentlemen, prominent in Washington circles in war times, were present at a social gathering with Mr. Lincoln. Noticing him as he talked with a distant group, they remarked on his great height. Finally one of them approached the President, and said, "Mr. Lincoln, I believe you are the tallest man I ever saw."

"O no!" said Mr. Lincoln, with a solemn smile. "I am short. Why, there's Long John Wentworth, of Chicago, could lick salt off the top of my head."

But the judgment of posterity will be that there was no taller soul in our century than Abraham Lincoln. He found himself on the high table-land of service, and bared his great shoulders to carry the burdens of the weak and the oppressed. He was tall enough to see over all the low hills of prejudice and caste, and go bravely on in noble, harmonious self-giving to his sublime destiny.

A man must find himself as the son of God. The prodigal was low and vulgar and common so long as he consorted with the swine and starved amid the husks, with his heart closed against home; but the day he thought of his father and the old home, with its happy servants, its gracious hospitality, its lighted

windows, its feasts and music, that day he found himself.

Henry Ward Beecher found a ragged boy in Brooklyn, shivering and sobbing. He caught him up in his arms, and, after soothing him for a few moments, said, "What's the matter, little one?"

The boy answered, "There ain't nothing the matter since you come."

There was nothing the matter with the prodigal after he found himself. The homeward tramp, the kiss of welcome, the ring of honor, the robe of beauty and cleanliness, the feast of fellowship—all that was incidental. The gist of it all, and that which cured everything, was when, through disappointment and failure, through husks and swineherds, he found himself. O brothers! sisters! you who are going on blindly, unconscious of the greatness of your inheritance, discouraged at your failure, but without a glimpse of your possible destiny, I pray God you may open your eyes and find yourselves this day!

Mr. Fitzgerald, who has recently been climbing some of the hitherto unexplored Australian Alps, writes of an occasion where a climb of thirty feet had to be made up the smooth face of an overhanging ledge. More difficult places had already been passed, but at this Mr. Fitzgerald, for the first time in all his Alpine experience, allowed doubt of his own capacity to cloud his mind. He shut his eyes. Immediately he lost control of himself. He trembled, grew blind, and fell over into the abyss, only being saved from death by the ropes which bound him to the guides. They pulled him out, and he got again into his place.

With eyes open, with senses alert, with determination coming back to his heart, he gathered himself together, found himself again, and climbed on without difficulty to the summit.

I bring you this message as God's message to your soul. If we find ourselves as his children, we may go forth, with his love warm in our hearts, with his hopefulness inspiring us, and his faith strengthening for every trial. In such a spirit we may fulfill the ideal about which Sarah Bolton sings:

"I like the man who faces what he must
With step triumphant, and a heart of cheer:
Who fights the daily battle without fear;
Sees his hopes fail, yet keeps unfaltering trust
That God is God; that somehow, true and just,
His plans work out for mortals; not a tear
Is shed when fortune, which the world holds dear,
Falls from his grasp: better, with love, a crust
Than living in dishonor: envies not,
Nor loses faith in man; but does his best,
Nor ever murmurs at his humbler lot,
But with a smile and words of hope, gives zest
To every toiler; he alone is great
Who by a life heroic conquers fate."

XXVI

Burning the Price of Shining

He was a burning and a shining light.—*John v, 35.*

HE who spake as never man spake gave this brief but suggestive and epigrammatic description of John the Baptist. The more you study it, the more just the estimate of that unique character will appear. Most of the life of John was hidden away out of sight. There is a long period of silence and darkness and a sudden flashing before the eyes of men, almost like a flash of lightning in its suddenness, and then he is gone. No, not gone; for his torch still illuminates and cheers the hearts of men. The candlestick is gone, but the light of his courage and fidelity and complete submission to Christ still shines in the world.

The heart of our theme this morning is in the relation of these two words: burning and shining. It lies in this, that John was a shining light because he was on fire. For thirty years in the desert, hidden away from the eye of the world, alone with God and with nature in the great solitudes, John had been burning as the candle of the Lord, when, suddenly, he is brought before the people, and begins to shine. It is the old miracle of growth since the beginning—the miracle of every spring-time—the buried root hidden away under the frozen earth in the depths of

the snow for months, yet alive and vital, and, after awhile, when the snow melts and the earth thaws out, there is the upspringing life piercing the mold of the earth, smiling in the face of the sun, shining forth in blossoms. All the winter it has been burning, and now it shines.

"Under the snow in the dark and the cold,
A pale little tendril was humming;
Sweetly it sang 'neath the frozen mold
Of the beautiful days that were coming.

'How foolish your song,' said a lump of clay;
'What is there, I ask, to prove them?
Just look at these walls between you and the day—
How can you have power to remove them?"

But under the ice and under the snow
The pale little sprout kept singing,
'I can not tell him, but I know, I know—
I know what the days are bringing:

Birds and blossoms and buzzing bees,
Blue, blue skies above me;
Bloom on the meadow and buds on the trees,
And the great, glad sun to love me.'

Then a pebble spoke up, 'You are quite absurd,'
It said, 'With your song's insistence;
For I never saw a tree or a bird,
So of course there are none in existence.'

But 'I know, I know,' the tendril cried,
In beautiful sweet unreason,
Till, lo! from its prison, glorified,
It burst in the glad spring season."

Surely there ought to be in our theme a strong and helpful lesson for our own hearts. Some people shine,

but do not burn; others burn, but do not shine. But real Christian shining, shining that reflects the beauty and glory of the Christ, can only come from the burning zeal of the soul. Such shining always costs. A candle or a torch or a lamp can not shine without consuming itself. It is the mystery and sublimity expressed in Christ's statement that the man who tries to save his life loses it, while the one who willingly loses his life saves it. To shine really means that you must burn up as a torch in self-surrender.

In a Chicago hospital, recently, a great surgeon was at the critical point in an operation that meant life or death to the woman upon whom he was operating, when he was stricken with heart-disease, and the knife fell from his nerveless hand. The slightest delay in the operation would have meant the certain death of the woman on the operating-table. Then it was that a great, heroic deed was performed. Among those standing by and giving assistance was a young physician, the son of the great surgeon. Seeing the danger, while his father was being carried dying from the room, he silenced his emotion, held his heart underneath, and, seizing the instrument as it fell from his father's hand, went right on with the surgical work. The father died within five minutes in a room adjoining the operating-room; but it was not till a half-hour later that the son, having brought the patient safely through the operation, went to his father's side, and, throwing himself down beside him, gave vent to his sorrow. Think of the burning sorrow in that young man's heart while shining in such splendid service!

We ought to thank God for the privilege of being consumed if our burning is illuminating somebody's path. Many who have lost the opportunity of thus shining on others would gladly buy it back again by furnishing themselves for the torch. Mary Clemmer Ames says:

"I wonder so that mothers ever fret
At little children clinging at their gown;
Or that the footsteps, when the days are wet,
Are ever black enough to make them frown.

If I could find a little muddy boot,
A cap, or jacket, on my chamber floor,
If I could kiss a rosy, restless foot,
And hear it patter in my home once more;

If I could mend a broken cart to-day,
To-morrow make a kite to reach the sky,
There is no woman in God's world could say
She was more blissfully content than I.

But, ah! the dainty pillow next my own
Is never rumpled by a shining head;
My singing birdling from its nest has flown!
The little boy I used to love is dead.

But now it seems surpassing strange to me
That, while I bore the badge of motherhood,
I did not kiss more oft and tenderly
My little child, who brought me only good."

Many of us know how to appreciate that feeling, that once the blessed privilege of sacrifice was ours, the privilege of burning our own oil of life to give gladness to a dear soul that no longer can be cheered by our light.

Under the old dispensation, on the robe of the priests there was a fringe of pomegranates and

golden bells. The pomegranates signified fruitfulness and fragrance, the saving quality of the priestly office. The bells announced his presence everywhere to the people. There were just as many pomegranates as there were bells; they were interspersed equally: first a pomegranate, and then a bell. There was to be no sound without its substance. It seems to me the teaching in this case is much the same as in the text we are studying. There can be an imitation of shining without any burning, as there can be paste diamonds without any value; and so there can be the sounding of the bells, the profession of the Christian experience, without the pomegranates of a fragrant and fruitful life. But all such shams and frauds will soon be detected. The sound of the bells is hateful unless we believe that the pomegranates of genuineness of character and fragrance of spirit are behind them. And the shining is a false glitter unless it be the glow of the burning soul devoted to the service of God and man.

Just how much of the bright light radiating from great souls comes from consuming fires of sorrow and trial it is not easy for us always to estimate. The worldly idea is that people shine most when they have their own way. There is a modern Beatitude on that order, which reads, "Blessed are those who row with the stream; for they shall get what they want." But that Beatitude proves false every day of the world, and, on the other hand, the most conspicuous cases of brilliant and enduring success, the most notable illuminations, come from careers that have been consumed in the giving forth of their light.

What a brilliant light Paul gave forth—a light which, like his divine Lord's, has been growing in brilliancy and splendor ever since his own day! Yet Paul's shining came from hot fires within. He tells us of his thorn in the flesh, a trouble so severe and trying that three times he besought God that it might be taken away from him; yet his prayer was in the spirit of Christ's submissiveness, and he did not rebel against God when it was made known to him that he must carry it with him to the grave.

One of our own American naturalists found on the Atlantic coast the skeleton of an eagle, with an iron trap clasped to one of its legs. On inquiring into the matter, the facts proved that many hundreds of miles away the noble bird had put its foot into the cruel jaws of the trap; and, for no one knows how long, it had flown across the country, weighted with anguish, and at last, worn out, had sunk down at the edge of the sea, with the trap still biting into its moldering bones.

How many noble men and women carry a living sorrow like that! They are caught between the jaws of some cruel trial, and they go through life never unconscious of its weight and its torture. But, thank God, we know by Paul's experience that such a trial, bitter though it be, need not keep us from being a shining light. No life shines more beautifully than Paul's, and no part of his career is so glorious as those years when his heavy burden was pressing on him like a thorn in the flesh. So none of us have a right to give up in despair and excuse ourselves from bearing fragrant pomegranates, or wearing a

cheerful face, or doing courageous deeds, because we have been caught in the jaws of some cruel sorrow that we must carry with us with weary wings until we are released at last on the shores of the Eternal Sea. Paul in his dungeon, chained to the Roman guard, silenced his pain and rebellion, and let the good cheer of Christ shine in his face and conversation, until, through the effect of his shining, there were many saints in "Cæsar's household."

John Bunyan, in Bedford Jail, thrust away his rebellious thoughts, and set himself to send his shining pilgrim on the way to the Celestial City. The jail could hold the burning body, wearing it out in confinement; but no jail was dark enough to hide the shining of the spirit that illuminates the world more brightly with every revolving year. No matter what our burdens, no matter what the secret fires of trial burning in the soul, God will make the conversation and the face and the life to shine unto his own glory if we submit ourselves in loving obedience to him.

After we have bowed with Jesus in the Garden of Gethsemane, and watched his agony—the agony of the bloody sweat, the agony of the groaning spirit—and yet heard his submissive voice, "Thy will, not mine, be done," we are not astonished when, on the cross, amid all its anguish and tumult and the insults of the mob, his great character shines forth in that loving prayer for his murderers, "Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do!"

When our hearts burn like Christ's with a desire to save and help men, then our lives shall shine like his in patience and forbearance and love. When it

is our meat and drink to do the will of God, as it was Christ's at the well-side of Samaria, then our conversation shall be a well of water springing up unto everlasting life. When our hearts are aflame, then men and women will look with reverent and grateful awe upon our shining faces.

I think we can find at least one suggestion that should be of great comfort to any poor sinner who hears the message this morning. It is when the soul is burning in repentance that God gives the shining joy that comes from the consciousness of forgiveness. The prodigal went home with a soul burning with repenting fires, but there was welcome shining in every window of the father's house on the night of his arrival. The bright light of forgiveness is the afterglow of the hidden flame of repentance. Tennyson, in that great poetic vision of the times of King Arthur, shows us Guinevere, the sinning queen, weeping in the monastery, where she has long been hidden, and crying aloud in her anguish:

"Late, late, so late! And dark the night and chill.
Late, late, so late! But we can enter still.
Too late, too late! ye can not enter now.

Have we not heard the bridegroom is so sweet?
O let us in, though late, to kiss his feet.
No, no, too late, ye can not enter now."

And we are told that that night in the darkness the good King Arthur sat on horseback at the door.

"And near him, the sad nuns, with each a light,
Stood, and he gave them charge about the queen,
To guard and foster her for evermore. . . .

. . . . She did not see the face,
Which then was as an angel's, but she saw
The moony vapor rolling round the king,
Who seemed the phantom of a giant in it,
Enwound him fold by fold, and made him gray
And grayer, till himself became a mist
Before her, moving ghost-like to his doom."

And then she wakened from her awful dream of sin, and became conscious of a great love for the king; and repentance swept over her, and she cried:

"Now I see thee, what thou art,
Thou art the highest and most human, too,
Not Launcelot, nor another. Is there none
Will tell the king I love him, though so late?
Now—ere he goes to that great battle? none:
Myself must tell him in that purer life,
But now it were too daring."

The queen found in good deeds her consciousness of forgiveness, and passed at last "where beyond these voices there is peace." But something sweeter than that is my message to you who are sad and sorrowfully conscious that you have sinned against the King, the King altogether lovely and beautiful. You need not wait until that "purer life" to dare to tell him that you have seen your folly, and that your heart breaks in repentance over your sin. Ah, no! He who looked gently into the face of that poor, broken woman so long ago, and said, "Neither do I condemn thee; go and sin no more," will let you come, and, bowing at his feet, tell him your love again. And out from that burning hell that is in your heart there shall come, through his great love and mercy, the bright glow of heaven's forgiveness.

XXVII

The Life that Now Is

The life that now is.—*1 Tim. iv, 8.*

OUR days are not vagrants, but are soldiers in an army, each having relation to all the rest. The life that now is has grown out of the life that was, and is the garden, the seed-ground, of the life that is to be. The life of to-day is the product of the past. This is true of nations and institutions, and of civilization itself. Matheson, the blind preacher of Edinburgh, says if he was going to find the secret of England's greatness in mechanical powers, he would not go to the great dockyards of Glasgow, where the thousands of hammers are clanging, and all the mechanical powers are at work, but he would go into a little house in Greenock, and into a humble room, and point to a small crib where James Watt was cradled. Or, if he were seeking out the source of England's scientific greatness in the last century, he would not go into the great laboratories, where the thousands of workmen are plying with the crucible, the pestle, and the mortar; instead he would go to the little village of Grantham, and pick out a dull-looking boy at the foot of his class in the village school, named Isaac Newton. Or, if he were searching out the source of England's religious greatness for the past century, he would not go into the great cathedrals, where the

aisles are dark with worshipers, but would go down to Epworth at midnight, where the little parsonage is on fire and they are carrying out a screaming child from the house, a child whose name was John Wesley.

But, after all, these men themselves are only stations along the course of mechanical and scientific and religious progress. They, in turn, are the product of their past. And this is no truer when applied to national or universal civilization than when applied to the individual; for all our lives are the product of the centuries that have gone behind us. The warriors, the scientists, the poets, the saints, and the martyrs have all wrought for us. Our life to-day is affected by all these streams of influence that have come down to us from soldier's battle-field, from statesman's council chamber, from martyr's fire, and from the altar of the saint, in all the past.

But there is a nearer view in which we are the product of the past. All the days of our past life have deposited their sediment to make up the soil of to-day. These days that are gone are dictating the kind of day we are living now. Men talk glibly about "turning over a new leaf," as though it were possible for a man suddenly to live to-day as though he had not lived yesterday and the day before, or had lived them differently. When Christ determined to feed the great multitude who had followed him into the desert, he took the little boy's five loaves and two fishes, and used them as the basis of the miracle in making his feast for thousands of hungry men and women and children. And so Christ will use your

yesterday as the basis of your to-day. If you repent of your sins and yield your heart to him, he will take your yesterday, or the man or woman your yesterday left you to be, and will bring out of it something better and nobler; but it will be characterized to a large extent by the kind of man you were yesterday. We can not separate our past from our present.

An old colored man came to a watchmaker, and gave him the two hands of a clock, saying: "I want yer to fix dese han's. Dey jess don keep no mo' kerrec' time for mo' den six munfs."

"Where is the clock?" answered the watchmaker.

"Out at de house on Injun Creek."

"But I must have the clock."

"Did n't I tell yer dar 's nothin' de matter wid de clock 'sceptin' de han's? And I done brought 'em to you. You 'ess want de clock so you kin tinker wid it and charge me a big price. Gimme back dem han's."

And, so saying, he indignantly went away, to find some reasonable watchmaker.

There are a great many people with more general intelligence and education, who seem to make just as great a blunder about their own lives. They know the life they are living to-day is not right, and they imagine that the power is in them to transform it any day they please into an entirely different life. They do not understand that the life has been growing wrong and more wrong for days and weeks and months and years; and that as the clockmaker must have the clock itself, and search back for the original difficulty, and remove that, in order to make the hands

go right, so our daily conduct has to do with the character which has been forming through all these years. The hands of conversation and behavior will not keep correct time unless the heart is right.

Memory comes in to have its influence on the life of to-day; no man can live as though he did not have the memories that are treasured up from his past. Tennyson, in his "Ode to Memory," says:

"Thou who
Stealest fire,
From the fountains of the past,
To glorify the present, O haste,
Visit my
Low desire!
Strengthen me, enlighten me!
I faint in this obscurity,
Thou dewy dawn of memory."

And yet again in the same Ode he gives utterance to what many of you who have passed the meridian of life are now constantly experiencing:

"Whither in after life retired
From brawling storms, from weary wind,
With youthful fancy re-inspired,
We may hold converse with all forms
Of the many-sided mind,
And those whom passion hath not blinded,
Subtle-thoughted, myriad-minded:—
My friend, with you to live alone
Were how much better than to own
A crown, a scepter, and a throne!"

Our memory helps either to comfort or to scourge our to-day. We can not escape from it, and our life

that now is, is colored by it. Thank God it may be forgiven, and the bitterness may be plucked out of it; but we can not live in the future as though it had not been.

We are face to face, however, with the very comforting truth that while the past clings to us for good or ill, and will not down, this very life we are now living is also a seed-time, and in it we are to plant the bulbs for to-morrow's blossoming. We can not lie still in to-day without robbing to-morrow; activity, progress, is the law of life, and we can not sin against it without bitter punishment. Horace Bushnell once said, speaking of the necessity of everything putting itself to active service, "If the stars did not move, they might rot in the sky." And surely we have illustrations enough in our modern life of men and women who have grown sluggish and drowsy, and have rotted in uselessness.

There are two wrong extremes to which we may go in reference to the future; one is, to pay no attention to it at all, and live as though to-day were all, as though the habits formed to-day have no influence on to-morrow; and the other, to look toward the future with foreboding, seeing its long journey mapped out for us, until we are crushed in the presence of the burdens of the years that are to come. It is well to remember that by doing our duty to-day we make the best possible preparation it is within our power to make for to-morrow. If by the grace of God we can bear to-day's burden in fellowship with Jesus Christ, to-morrow shall receive the sacred inheritance of to-day's fidelity, and thus one day at a time shall stand

with holy hands of benediction above the dawning of the day to come. Some poet says:

"One single day
Is not so much to look upon. There is some way
Of passing hours of such a limit. We can face
A single day; but place
 Too many days before sad eyes—
 Too many days for smothered sighs—
 And we lose heart
 Just at the start.
Years are not long, nor lives—
The longest which survives—
 And yet, to look across
A future we must tread bowed by a sense of loss,
Bearing some burden weighing down so low
That we can scarcely go
 One step ahead, this is so hard,
 So stern a view to face, unstarred,
 Untouched by light, so masked with dread,
 If we would take a step ahead.
 Be brave and keep
The feet quite steady; feel the breath of life sweep
Ever on our face again.
We must not look across—looking is vain—
But downward to the next close step,
And up. Eyes which have wept
Must look a little way ahead, not far.
God broke our years to hours and days,
 That hour by hour,
 And day by day,
 Just going on a little way,
 We might be able, all along,
 To keep quite strong.

✓ Should all the weight of life
Be laid across our shoulders, and the future, rife
 With woe and struggle, meet us face to face
At just one place,

We could not go ;
Our feet would stop ; and so
God lays a little on us every day,
And never, I believe, on all the way
Will burdens bear so deep,
Or pathways lie so steep,
But we can go, if, by God's power,
We only bear the burden of the hour."

In another place, in writing to the Galatians, Paul says, having reference, as in this case, to the conditions of the present life: "The life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God." Paul felt that his life was permeated with the atmosphere of conscious reverence and submission to Christ. Hazlitt, in one of his essays, tells an interesting story of Charles Lamb. That picturesque man was once enjoying the society of a group of literary friends when some one suggested that they undertake to imagine how they would act and how they would feel if some of the great and distinguished people of the past should suddenly appear then and there before them. At last one of the company said, "What would each of you do should Jesus Christ appear?" A hush of solemnity fell on all the circle. After a moment's pause Charles Lamb, evidently deeply stirred by emotion, replied, reverently, "If Shakespeare should come among us we should all rise; but if He should appear we should all kneel." And Hazlitt says that not one in the company dissented from that view. Paul's feeling that his life was constantly lived by faith in Christ, was another way of saying that the attitude of his soul was that of ever kneeling at the feet of Jesus as his Master and Lord.

Such a spirit gives dignity and sublimity to the life that now is. No matter how hard or uncomfortable the circumstances of life, it is the spirit of life that decides its quality. Among the incidents of the Cuban campaign in the Spanish-American War, Dr. Vaden-Water describes a communion service in which he used a hard-tack box covered with his own towel for an altar. The sacraments were hard-tack for bread and very much watered wine. "I was dressed," he says, "in a blue flannel shirt and canvas trousers. I had no surplice, nothing. Yet it was solemn and grand, standing there knee-deep in the mud and seeing the hundreds of hands extended for the offerings; grander than all the surroundings of an altar or cathedral; divine, in fact, because the Spirit of God was there." And so the spirit in which we live this present life dictates the quality of the life.

By the quality of the life we are living to-day we are deciding the kind of messengers we will send into to-morrow—messengers borne down with disappointment or with glad messages of good cheer. Shall we send ravens into the morrow to croak, or shall we send robins to chirp, or nightingales to sing? We are deciding to-day.

A sergeant of the Forty-seventh New York Regiment, while stationed at Porto Rico, discovered a singular evidence of superstition. While seeking specimens of the birds of the island for a friend who is a naturalist, he caught a bird resembling an oriole. Attached to one of its legs was a small card requesting prayer for the soul of Julie Baldez. He was curious about the identity of the person who took this strange

XXVIII

Soldiers who Wait for the Stars

So we labored in the work: and half of them held the spears, from the rising of the morning till the stars appeared.
—*Nehemiah iv, 21.*

WE talk about "red-letter" days, but I have just had a "green-letter" day, and that is better. Your "red-letter" day suggests the sharp competitions, the heart-burning struggles, the killing pace by which men get on to success and fame; by which they gather money, and drive their chariot to the head of the procession. But the "green-letter" day means the open fields, the hillside pastures, the dense woods, the little stream of water with the graceful willows hanging about it; it means the robin's nest in the orchard, the flock of swallows chattering on the peak of the barn, the black crow's harsh cry, the blackbird's spicy call. It means the stillness of high noon in the shade of the trees; it means the afternoon wash of the waves on the pebbly beach; it means the sunset cloud with God for an artist to paint dissolving pictures; and last, and best of all, it means the quiet of the night; it means the blue sky sprinkled with star-dust up the milky way. It means the glory of the stars shining down out of their eternal peace, soothing restless and weary hearts.

Whatever sermon we have this morning was born the other night on the shore of Lake Erie, while I lay

at the foot of a giant oak, gazing at the stars. A great camp-fire built of driftwood was lying down on the beach, and my friends and myself were congratulating ourselves on the rare beauty and glory of the day, and were speaking grateful words of appreciation of our own enjoyment of it. But all the while an under-current of thought and reverie, half-unconscious, was running through my mind and heart as I looked into the jeweled bosom of the sky. It was all so splendid, so beautiful, that I longed to capture it somehow, and bring it back to my people who had wrought all day in shop and store and office, that they might enjoy it, and be inspired by it. And as I sought to grasp it so that it might not elude me altogether, there came to my memory this rarely beautiful and poetic expression of Nehemiah, telling of the difficulties of their work, and of the patience and persistent watchfulness which was required of them in carrying forward the building of the walls of Jerusalem to a successful completion.

The work which Nehemiah describes was commonplace enough. It was hard and trying work; but with what poetic fancy does he tell us about it! Some men would have said, "They held the spears up all day." Others, "From such o'clock in the morning, to such a time at night." But Nehemiah's was a healthy nature. He was a man of ideals. There was poetry in his soul, and he adds the romantic touch to the hard prosaic daily routine when he says, "So we labored in the work: and half of them held the spears, from the rising of the morning till the stars appeared."

Here is our first lesson. Our lives may be humble

and commonplace in the actual work which we have to do, but we may throw a glow of poetry and romance about them by doing our work for a loving purpose or performing it in a beautiful spirit. The most important and responsible work in the world may be made dusty and dirty slavery by doing it in a commonplace, sordid spirit; and, on the other hand, hard and trying and exacting toil may be glorified by the spirit of exaltation in the heart of the man or woman who performs it.

Some one has said that human life is like the waves that come in from across the lake or the sea, and beat on the beach. We are the beach, and the sound that is made, the result, depends on us. If you have lived by the water or spent a summer near it, you must have noticed the different sounds made by the waves as they break on different beaches. They are quietest when the shore is of smooth, hard sand, for they roll up and slide back again with little to impede them. Among big, rough rocks and stones they are more noisy. Even the ripples have something to say as they go splashing around, and when the wind rises to a gale the big breakers come rushing in and fall forward on the great rugged rocks with a tremendous crash and roar. Now find a place where the beach is of limestone gravel (such as rejoiced the afternoon of my green-letter day), and there we have music. The sand is quiet, and the rocks are noisy, but the gravel sings. It is full of tiny holes and spaces, through which the water rises and falls with a pleasant tinkling sound, and sometimes the waves lay hold of the little stones and roll them over and over upon each other,

like laughing children at play, with a jolly rush and rustle. It is as if the waves and the stones were whispering and laughing together.

There are waves and breakers beating upon our hearts just as there are upon the beaches. Some of them are waves of happiness and some of sorrow; some of success and victory, and some of failure and defeat. But, whatever the wave may be, the sound that it makes, the result produced, depends largely upon the kind of heart upon which it falls.

There are among the men and women we know the three kinds of beaches we have described. There are people who are silent and stoical like the sand. They do not seem to care what happens to them. Life's hardships and troubles do not seem to affect them much; but, on the other hand, they do not get the pleasure they might out of life's good things, simply because they will not respond to them. There are others who are as noisy as the rocky shore. When a wave of happiness comes they enjoy it; but when it is a wave of sorrow they are angry and bitter, and they make other people suffer as well as themselves. But, thank God, there are still others, and it is possible by God's help for each one of us to bring ourselves into that class, who are like limestone gravel, and give out only music. Even when trouble beats upon them they are cheery and brave, and when the good things of life fall into their laps, they go forth as did Samson from the hive he found in the carcass of his slain lion, with hands full of honey to share with other people. No life is so hard but it may be set to music, no day so trying but the stars may brood over it.

John Burroughs, who is perhaps our greatest living interpreter of nature voices, has just discovered that even the worm-eating warbler has a song of ecstasy. Most people supposed it was only a common plodding worm-eater, but Mr. Burroughs has discovered that this little plodder among the birds makes its burdens light with a very sweet and lovely song of upward flight. The naturalist had often heard a fine burst of melody that was unknown to him. One June day he was fortunate enough to see the humble bird delivering its song in the air above the low trees. The bird darts upward fifty feet or more, and gives forth a series of rapid, ringing musical notes, which quickly glide into the long, sparrowlike trill that forms his ordinary workaday song. While this part is being uttered, the singer is on his downward flight into the woods, on his search for more worms. Most of our lives must be after food like the worm-eating warbler. One in his drugstore, another in his law-office, another in the drygoods store, another in his shop, another in the kitchen or the field, seeks the worms that feed this common life where we are getting our education; we are all plodders in a way—and blessed be plodding and drudgery if they teach us their lessons; but we may have a song even in the midst of our plodding, and we may have our hours of ecstasy when we sing a quicker, nobler music. Our feet are on the earth, but our eyes may often wander to the stars and catch their inspiration.

And this brings us to our second lesson, that to keep life from growing sordid and mean we must ever develop in ourselves the upward look. We must not

fail to see the divine side of things. The stars are a part of God's universe as well as the earth on which we walk. My friends took me in the morning hours of my "green-letter" day to see a great eagle's nest that was a prominent feature of the neighborhood where we were. We found it in a piece of woods near the shores of the lake. A splendid tree stretching upward nearly a hundred feet towards the sky had long, long ago dropped off its upper branches, and left stretching upward, gaunt and ugly, two great broken arms. In the crotch between these two branches eagles have builded and rebuilt their nests for generation after generation. The oldest grandfather in the community tells how, when he was a boy, his father, and grandfather before him, talked and wondered about this same eagle's nest. And so year after year, for a hundred years and more, eagles have made their home and hatched out their young eaglets in that same lofty, rugged perch.

The people of the community, with rare good sense and feeling, frown upon any attempt to frighten or harm their royal guests. And with none to make them afraid, the great birds come back and rear their young in peace. No one can compute how much good that eagle's nest has done in that quiet farm settlement. No one can estimate how many boys and girls have had higher-soaring thoughts as they watched those long-winged birds piercing the upper air. It would be impossible, I think, for unspoiled human nature, fresh and sweet with the dew of youth upon it, to fail to catch something of the inspiration of the eagle's presence and noble bearing. It would be impossible

not to have their interest and sympathy go with him in the long-elevated flights during which he draws great lines across the sky, and sees the forests and the fields and the orchards like a carpet beneath him. His dignity, elevation, repose—all these give the thoughts of men and women and children a wide sweep; it serves to lift them up above the petty cares of the dusty earth beneath.

If we are to do our best work in this world, we must catch this soaring spirit. This is the meaning of that great paragraph in Isaiah in which man's weakness is grafted on to God's power and strength: "Hast thou not known? hast thou not heard, that the everlasting God, the Lord, the Creator of the ends of the earth, fainteth not, neither is weary? there is no searching of his understanding. . . . Even the youths shall faint and be weary, and the young men shall utterly fall: but they that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings as eagles; they shall run, and not be weary, and they shall walk, and not faint."

But we must not miss another great lesson, and that is the thought of that persistence which alone brings us to victory. In the Book of Revelation there are a great many rich promises given to Christians. There is the promise that they shall be "clothed in white raiment," that their names shall be written in "the Book of Life," and shall be confessed before "the Father and before his angels." Again it is promised by the Savior himself that the true Christian shall be made a pillar in the temple of God to go no more out. The name of God is to be written upon him, and the

new name of his Divine Lord. These and many other promises equally as precious are all hinged upon the same condition couched in four words, "to him that overcometh." The crown is for the man that stands faithful "from the rising of the morning till the stars appear." "He that endureth unto the end shall be saved," is the declaration of the Divine Word. And just as sure as the stars, beaming with poetry and romance and glory, draw their curtains of consolation and peace about every trying and smoky day of human effort; just so sure the stars of appreciation and victory shall crown every life of honest, faithful service for God and humanity. He who made the stars, and holds them in the hollow of his hand, is our Father, and knows how to bless and reward his children. If faithful to him, he will bring us to the stars at last.

But let us not be persistent in a grim, unlovely spirit. Let us press forward rather in the gentle, smiling spirit of the Christian. Let us realize the poet's song:

"Smile a little, smile a little,
As you go along,
Not alone when life is pleasant
But when things go wrong.
Care delights to see you frowning,
Loves to hear you sigh;
Turn a smiling face upon her,
Quick the dame will fly.

Smile a little, smile a little,
All along the road;
Every life must have its burden,
Every heart its load.

Why sit down in gloom and darkness,
With your grief to sup?
As you drink Fate's bitter tonic
Smile across the cup.

Smile upon the troubled pilgrims
Whom you pass and meet;
Frowns are thorns, and smiles are blossoms
Oft for weary feet.
Do not make the way seem harder
By a sullen face,
Smile a little, smile a little,
Brighten up the place.

Smile upon your undone labor ;
Not for one who grieves
O'er his task, waits wealth or glory ;
He who smiles achieves.
Though you meet with loss and sorrow
In the passing years,
Smile a little, smile a little,
Even through your tears."

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